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LATER DYNASTIES OF EGYPT

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RAMESES III, XXIII DYNASTY
By courtesy of the Cairo Museum

Frontispiece

LATER DYNASTIES OF EGYPT

BY THE LATE
LIEUT.-COLONEL P. G. ELGOOD, C.M.G.

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BASIL BLACKWELL
OXFORD

1951

'Time hath his revolution: there must be a period
and an end to all temporal things, *finis rerum*,
an end of names and dignities, and whatsoever
is terrene.'—Chief-Justice CREWE (A.D. 1633)

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PREFACE

IN writing this book the author desired, as in his previous work on the Ptolemies, to interest the general reader in the ruling personalities in Egypt during a period when the fate of that country was as intertwined with that of its neighbour states as it is in modern days. Egyptian temple walls and stelae tell part of the story, the Bible and Greek historians add to the tale, yet it is still confused. The tangled thread has recently been further unravelled by such scholars as Jouguet, Drioton and Vandier; also through the results of recent excavations at Tanis carried out by Montet.

Most sincere thanks are due to Professor Wace of the Farouk University at Alexandria, to Mr. Alan Rowe of the Greco-Roman Museum, Alexandria, and to Mr. Edwards of the British Museum for their advice; to M. Jouguet for his continued interest in this production; and, lastly, to Mrs. Job for her preparation of the script.

Special thanks are due to Mr. R. O. Faulkner for his help in modernizing the spelling and in other respects bringing the work up to date.



CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
PREFACE	v
I. THE TWENTIETH DYNASTY	I
II. THE TWENTIETH DYNASTY (<i>continued</i>)	11
III. THE TWENTY-FIRST DYNASTY	21
IV. THE TWENTY-SECOND AND TWENTY-THIRD DYNASTIES	36
V. THE TWENTY-FOURTH AND TWENTY-FIFTH DYNASTIES	58
VI. THE TWENTY-SIXTH OR SAITE DYNASTY	74
VII. THE TWENTY-SIXTH DYNASTY (<i>continued</i>)	87
VIII. THE TWENTY-SIXTH DYNASTY (<i>continued</i>)	103
IX. THE TWENTY-SIXTH (<i>continued</i>) AND THE TWENTY- SEVENTH OR PERSIAN DYNASTIES	115
X. THE TWENTY-EIGHTH TO THE THIRTY-FIRST DYNASTIES	121
INDEX	147

PLATES

RAMESSES III	<i>Frontispiece</i>
HORUS PROTECTING NECTANEBO II	<i>facing p. 136</i>



LATER DYNASTIES OF EGYPT

CHAPTER I

THE TWENTIETH DYNASTY

Setnakhte and Ramesses III

Usima'rē'-sotpenrē'-miamūn Setnakhte-mererrē'-miamūn c. 1200 B.C.

THE Nineteenth Dynasty had drawn to a disastrous close. The death of King Menepthah ushered in a dynastic struggle in which Amenmosē, Siptah and Sethos II in turn mounted the throne, the last-named being regarded in later times as the sole legitimate successor of Menepthah. This strife in high places must have had most injurious effects on the organization of government, and on the death of Sethos II there followed a period of utter anarchy. The historical portion of the great Harris Papyrus¹ gives a vivid picture of the chaotic state of affairs:

The land of Egypt had been scattered abroad, and everyone was equal; they had had no leader for many years before, back in other times, and the land of Egypt consisted of officials and mayors, one slaying the other among great and small. After this there came another time of years of famine, when they had Irsu a Syrian as chief, he having put the entire land in subjection to him; each joined with his neighbour in plundering their goods, and they treated the gods as [they did] men, so that none dedicated offerings in their fanes. But the gods turned [themselves] to peace so as to put the land in its proper state in accordance with its normal condition, and they established their son who came forth from their flesh as ruler of every land upon their great throne, even King Usima'rē'-sotpenrē'-miamūn, the Son of Rē' Setnakhte-mererrē'-miamūn; he was the image of Seth² when he rages. He supplied the fainting land, he slew the froward who were in Tomery,³ he purified the great throne of Egypt, he was ruler of the Two Lands on the throne of Atum.⁴ He caused the faces that had been bowed down to be alert, so that everyone might know his neighbour who had been walled in;⁵ he re-established the fanes with offerings so that sacrifice might be made to the Nine Gods according to their rites. He appointed me to be Crown Prince on the seat of Geb,⁶ and I was

¹ Written under Ramesses IV to declare the title to fame of his father, Ramesses III. In the extract which follows the latter is supposed to be speaking.

² The storm-god.

³ A name for Egypt.

⁴ The aged sun-god.

⁵ i.e. who had taken refuge in walled towns.

⁶ The earth-god.

great leader of the Empire¹ of Egypt as commander of the whole united land. He [King Setnakhte] went to rest in his horizon² like the Nine Gods, and the ceremonies of Osiris were celebrated for him, also the conveyance in his royal bark upon the river,³ and he rested in his eternal mansion on the west of Thebes.

The above quotation is the only source of information we possess regarding the anarchy which followed the collapse of the Nineteenth Dynasty and the subsequent restoration of order. King Setnakhte may perhaps have been related to the old royal house, and thus may have had a legitimate claim to the throne, but it seems likely that he did not assume the royal style until he had broken the back of his task; the only date of his known is year 1, and this apparently very short reign would hardly have given him time enough to establish even a moderately stable government unless his success was phenomenally rapid. On the other hand, it may be but accident that has preserved only this one date; it is quite possible that Setnakhte may have ruled for several years, though in any case it can hardly have been a long reign. But however this may be, it is quite clear that the nation as a whole welcomed a strong ruler who would suppress disorder with a ruthless hand, and at his death Setnakhte bequeathed to his son Ramesses III a kingdom which was definitely on the way to recovery, even though no doubt much remained to be done.

Usima'eē'-miamūn Ra'messe-Hekōn (Ramesses III)

1200-1168 B.C.

Although in the main internal order had already been restored when Ramesses III ascended the throne, yet the new king had no easy task before him; he was faced with a situation much resembling that to which Menephtah had succeeded after the decline in the latter years of Ramesses II, but now the state of affairs was if anything yet more serious. The Libyans and the Meshwesh⁴ had not only taken advantage of the general chaos to raid the Delta and ravage its towns, but numbers had actually settled there, and further immigrations threatened, while the mass movements of peoples which were turning the Aegean basin into a positive

¹ Lit. 'lands'.

² I.e. died and was buried; the metaphorical that of the setting sun.

³ The funeral procession had to cross the river to reach the royal tomb in the western hills.

⁴ Possibly the maxyes of Herodotus, from Tunisia.

whirlpool gave warning of grave danger threatening from the north. Obviously the first duty before Ramesses III was to create an army and a navy competent to deal with a really alarming situation, and he set about the task at once. A conscription of one man in every ten was made—temple employees being exempt—and strong forces of infantry and chariotry were raised, supported by Sherden and other foreign auxiliaries, while a strong navy was also built up. After a few years of grace which gave the Pharaoh time to prepare, the storm burst; in year 5 the Libyans and Meshwesh invaded the Delta in force. The scenes at Medinet Habu¹ depict the whole course of the campaign; we see the Pharaoh receiving the falchion from the hand of the god Amūn, indicating that the war had divine sanction, and thereafter leaving the temple in state; the formal parade when Ramesses mounts his chariot in the presence of the assembled troops; the commencement of the march, the Pharaoh being preceded by a standard of Amūn, a ram's head on a tall pole in a chariot of its own, while the army follows, the Egyptians marching together and the foreign auxiliaries grouped in racial contingents; the shock of battle; the pursuit of the beaten foe; and the celebration of victory, when Ramesses addresses his officers, the prisoners are paraded before him, and the hands and phalli of the slain are piled in heaps. Unfortunately the records tell us nothing of the place of the battle or of the tactics employed, but since according to the Egyptian account the number of enemy slain amounted to over 25,000, we can obtain some notion both of the size of the invading force and of the completeness of the Egyptian victory. Doubtless the Delta was now cleared of the Libyan settlers and bandits who had been making life intolerable for the Egyptians in the north.

Three years after the great victory over the Libyans an even greater danger threatened Egypt. The turmoil in the Aegean basin was reaching a climax, and a confederation of 'the Peoples of the Sea', namely the Pelesti, Tjekker, Sheklesh, Danaoi and Weshesh, overran Asia Minor and destroyed the Hittite Empire. They continued their march southwards into Syria, the women and children in two-wheeled ox-carts, while at sea a considerable fleet kept watch and ward; it was not merely a military invasion, but a migration of peoples seeking new lands in which to settle. The invaders occupied the land of Amor, and there apparently

¹ The funerary temple of Ramesses III on the west bank of the Nile opposite Thebes.

halted for a while to rest and concentrate their forces. On receipt of this alarming news Ramesses took immediate action. Mobilizing his army and navy, he marched to meet the invaders, who had resumed their southward advance along the coast. The Egyptian navy trapped the hostile fleet in a harbour or estuary and utterly destroyed it; the enemy's ships were capsized or carried by boarding, while any vessel coming within effective range of the shore was greeted with volleys of arrows from troops lined up at the water's edge. The invasion by land was dealt with equally successfully and another great danger to Egypt was averted. Unfortunately there is again no conclusive evidence as to where these battles were fought, but it seems most likely that the naval action took place in one of the mouths of the Nile, and that the battle on land was somewhere in the coastal plain of Palestine.

Having effectually stopped the advance on Egypt of the Peoples of the Sea, Ramesses decided on a counterstroke to make assurance doubly sure. Probably quite soon after the great victory of year 8 the Pharaoh marched on Syria.¹ He overran Amor, doubtless with the object of breaking up any remnant of the invaders that may have been concentrated there, and thereafter carried his arms into what had recently been the Syrian provinces of the Hittite Empire, capturing among other cities Tunip, Aleppo and Carchemish. It would thus appear that at one blow Ramesses III had restored the Egyptian Empire to its greatest extent in the palmy days of the Eighteenth Dynasty, but the appearance was illusive; there is nothing to show how long this northern territory was held, and in the circumstances then prevailing it was probably beyond the power of Egypt to defend or even control territories so far distant. In all probability the royal writ was little effective north of the Palestino-Syrian border.

Having successfully crushed two attempted invasions, Ramesses had to deal with yet a third. In year 11 the Meshwesh returned to the charge. They allied themselves with the Libyan tribe of the Tjemhi, but the other main Libyan people, the Tjehenu, refused to join them. These last were those who lived nearest the western border of the Delta, and they no doubt felt that they had already suffered enough at the hands of the Egyptian army. But their refusal availed them little; they were overrun and ravaged

¹ The date of this Syrian campaign is not finally established, but it looks very like an immediate sequel to the victory over the Peoples of the Sea.

by the invaders, who thereafter marched on Egypt. The evidence as to where they were met by the Egyptians is conflicting, but it would appear that the main body was caught and crushed at the north-west corner of the Delta, while a separate detachment succeeded in reaching 'the Water of Prë', the eastern arm of the Nile, before being rounded up. In any case the Egyptian victory was decisive; for the rest of the reign Egypt was freed from this recurrent menace from abroad.

Apart from these three major campaigns, Ramesses had a brief conflict with the Beduin of the Mount Seir region, and he may have had to quell a rebellion in Nubia, but these 'little wars' were but local disturbances of the peace, and we know neither their dates nor anything else about them, apart from the fact of their occurrence. Ramesses III's title to fame as a soldier rests not on these small affairs, nor on his rush to Carchemish, when the opposition may have been slight, but on the fact that he broke three great attempts at the conquest of Egypt, attempts which aimed not merely at political subjection but at actual settlement on Egyptian soil. The men also who served in his armies must have been stout fighting men; the widespread belief that the Ancient Egyptian made but a poor soldier is demonstrably false, at any rate prior to the period of the Decadence. Of the two main facts quoted in support of this belief, the first, the employment of foreign auxiliaries, is no more a derogation of the quality of their Egyptian comrades than the existence of native regiments under the British and French flags is derogatory to the white troops with whom they serve; it is simply a question of manpower. The other argument urged in support of the view here contested is the diatribes against the military career which are found in the Egyptian school-books, which are supposed to indicate the essentially unmilitary character of the Egyptians. But surely they indicate the exact opposite. Not only were their authors interested parties, anxious to obtain pupils for the profession of scribe, but the elaborate details of the horrors of life in the army in themselves suggest that much discouragement was required to prevent young men from voluntarily embracing the career of arms.

In the intervals of his campaigns Ramesses III continued the reorganization of government begun by Setnakhte; life and property were made secure, canals and irrigation channels were

cleared of silt and weeds and restored to working order and trade revived. One great military-mercantile expedition went to Punt¹ and returned with the products of tropical Africa; gold from Nubia, copper from Asia and turquoise from Sinai piled up in the royal treasury or were distributed as gifts to the temples. Of the peace which reigned in Egypt when the wars were over, Raimesses tells us in the Harris Papyrus: 'I planted the whole land with trees and verdure, and I let the people sit in their shade; I caused the woman of Tomery to travel freely to the place where she would, for no foreigner or anyone on the road molested her. I allowed the infantry and the chariotry to settle down in my time, the Sherden and the Kehek lying full length on their backs in their towns; they had no fear, for there was no foeman from Kush² or Syrian enemy, their bows and their weapons were laid aside in their arsenals. They were sated and drunk with joy, their wives being with them and their children beside them; they looked not behind them, their hearts were confident, for I was with them as a guardian who protected their bodies. I nourished the entire land, whether foreigners, plebs, patricians or sun-folk, whether male or female. I saved a man from his wrongs and gave him breath, I rescued him from whoso was stronger and weightier than he. I made a census of everyone in their towns, I nourished others in the Office of the Morning[?].³ I restored again the land which had been wasted, and the land was contented and happy during my kingship; I did good to the gods as well as to men, and I possessed naught which belonged to another.'

Meanwhile, the king was busy also in distributing the spoils he had brought from Asia. It was plunder large enough to excite enthusiasm: captives by the thousand, precious metals by the hundredweight, cattle and sheep in numbers hardly countable. The division seems to have followed precedent pretty closely: the throne taking the prisoners, the temples the rest. It was a reasonable procedure, seeing that the first needed the labour to cultivate the extensive domains, and the second revenue to maintain a swollen hierarchy. How far piety and how far policy inspired the division is a matter of speculation: but since the prestige of the Egyptian hierarchy equalled, if it did not eclipse, that of the throne, it was to the interest of the second to propitiate

¹ Probably the region near the Horn of Africa.

² Nubia.

³ The meaning of this expression is obscure.

the priesthood by all means within its power, and at this juncture Ramesses was rich enough to indulge the fancy.

Of the plunder of Asia, Amen-Rē¹ of Thebes secured the lion's share: naturally enough seeing this god's pronounced ascendancy over other divinities of Egypt. From a local cult, his worship had risen to be a national: from a spiritual institution his priesthood had developed into a temporal corporation. In the process the hierarchy had become exceedingly wealthy: its possessions embraced one-tenth of the cultivable land of Egypt, one to two per cent of its population, and a vast revenue from other sources.¹ But Amen-Rē's claim to supremacy had not been accepted without a struggle by Memphis and Heliopolis. Their priests had contested it, had bidden the congregations to be faithful to Ptah and Rē'-Atum: the pains had been wasted, and the Theban hierarchy would pompously cry: 'When a message comes from Heaven, it is heard at Heliopolis, repeated at Memphis, communicated to the city of Amūn. The answer is given at Thebes . . . life and death depends on Thebes.' None the less, Ramesses' attitude to the Egyptian pantheon was both catholic and politic. Since Ptah of Memphis and Rē'-Atum of Heliopolis were also national gods, he offered their priesthoods a share of the spoil proportionate to the size of their revenue. Nor did his patronage of the Egyptian pantheon stop there: Shu of This, Thoth of Hermopolis, Wepwawet of Asyūt, Sutekh of Ombo and Horus of Athribis profited from the king's generosity.

But Ramesses expected some return for his liberality, and it must be said that the priesthoods honourably endeavoured to fulfil the obligation. Those of Memphis and Hermopolis extended the temple circumscription, reclaimed waste land within the new boundaries, planted barley and vines, cleansed existing sacred lakes, while the priests of local shrines carved on the walls eulogies of the king's generosity and piety. Across the river, at Medīnet Habu, the king erected an imposing monument consisting of a pavilion and a mortuary temple to the memory of the Third Ramesses, the latter being served by the Theban priesthood of Amūn, Sekhmet, goddess of war, and Sheshat, goddess of writing, were the presiding divinities of the first: appropriately enough since the reliefs on the outer walls depict

¹ Erman estimated the possession of Amen-Rē of Thebes at 926 square miles of land, 81,000 serfs and 400,000 head of cattle.

Ramesses' military triumphs in Asia and Libya. But inside the pavilion a different story is unfolded. Seeking distraction from the cares of state, the king enters the women's apartments. Wearily he sinks into a chair, lets his eyes wander round the bevy of girls, who stand modestly before him. It is an exciting moment for young ladies. Each seeks to catch the royal look, each is in a fever, lest it should miss her. At last the choice is made, the happy bride of the moment advances, the king puts his arm round her waist, strokes her pretty cheek, while the others beat their tambourines. An open court separates the pavilion from the temple, and on the walls of the last are more reliefs, commemorating Ramesses' second Libyan campaign and recording the names of princes and principalities of Asia that have acknowledged defeat. Of no less interest is a relief recording the king's occupation of the plain of Canaan. A fortified city has been invested: the scaling ladders rest against the wall, the stormers, obviously auxiliaries from their shields and helmets, have their feet on the lower rungs. Within and without the walls and colonnades that flank the second court and the hypostyle halls, the artist changes his theme. The decoration strikes a less martial note. One long relief treats of scenes from the festival of Min, god of the harvest. Borne on a litter upheld by his sons, Ramesses reviews a regiment of priests escorting an image of the god: a second depicts the king watched by the gods of the underworld at work ploughing and reaping the fields of Paradise. On either side of the great hall are chapels dedicated to the Theban trinity of Amen-Rē', Mut and Khons, to Osiris and Thoth, to Nekhbet and Edjō, patron goddesses of Upper and Lower Egypt. Thus the artist finds in life after death and in the occupations of Paradise his inspiration.

Despite all that has been said, temple architecture of the period is unimpressive. Design is poor, execution careless, detail sloven. Originality has been lost, imitation has taken its place: convention has tied builder, draughtsman and scribe alike. The hymns are a repetition of hymns current centuries before, the battle scenes, apart from the spirited representation of an action at sea, have a familiar air. From this general judgement may be excepted the royal titles and royal dress inscribed and depicted on reliefs. Time was unlikely to amend either, and Ramesses III may well have worn the close-fitting helmet, the uraeus collar, the pleated tunic,

the bracelets, the false tail and the sandals as preceding Pharaohs had done.

It was an occasion that Ramesses seized to remind the various hierarchies of their obligations. All was not well with the temple administration: whispers of embezzlement and licence were abroad, and the king took steps to purge the evils. Addressing Amen-Rē, he cried, 'I have put its [Medīnet Habu] possessions into writing: I have made for thee the property lists that they may be for ever in thy name'. Addressing Ptah, he cried, 'I have made for thee great decrees for the administration of thy house, and for the administration of the pure settlement of women'. It was plain speaking and no doubt most necessary. On the other hand, he upheld stoutly all legitimate temple rights, as a stela on Elephantine island testifies. It was a question there of the claim of Khnum, god of the cataract, to a 'field' on the main land. The local administrator contested it: conscripting Khnum's serfs, seizing the god's ships and their cargoes, until Ramesses stopped the practice. In this instance, the offender escaped with a caution, but a colleague at Athribis (Benha) was less fortunate. The crime no doubt was more heinous. Taking advantage of the confusion of government, the offender had seized the temple of Horus, robbed the god of his perquisites and in the place of stewards and inspectors who dared protest, had installed creatures of his own. It was almost treason, and Ramesses made short work of the culprit.

Conspiracy within the palace darkened, if it did not shorten, Ramesses' last years of life. It was hatched in the women's apartments: Tiy, the queen-mother or step-mother, was the originator, Pentwēre, her son, the puppet of the plot. But sex hampered this woman: she could conceive, but to execute she needed assistance from a man. So Tiy looked about for a partner and found in Pebekkamen, an officer of the household, a whole-hearted confederate. It was a judicious choice, since his office of 'chief of the chamber' permitted Pebekkamen to pass in and out of the women's quarter without arousing gossip. The hour also was propitious for conspiracy. Ramesses had outlived his popularity; the memory of his triumphs in peace and war had faded. The foreigner was elbowing the native-born Egyptian out of his place and profit, and the country may reasonably have thought that a younger king would mend matters. Thus a

sombre cloud hung over the palace, and the air was heavy with suspicion. In every corner there lurked an eavesdropper ready to whisper in the king's ear an incautious word, and Ramesses in his old age was ready to listen. Thus Pebekkamen had little difficulty in persuading secretaries and chamberlains, standard-bearers and commanders, overseers and inspectors of the palace to join the conspiracy. Emboldened by the success, he took to communicating outside the gates a message from the queen. 'Stir up the people,' she charged him to tell the fathers and brothers of her women, and incite them to hostility against their lord.

In short, the plot promised well and Pebekkamen was preparing to strike when doubt arose as to the attitude of the palace guards. Two of the conspirators, Peyes, commander-in-chief of the army, and 'Onency, the police captain, were ready to answer for the men, but the others felt less sure, and Pebekkamen hesitated, neither daring to approach the guard openly lest the secret be betrayed, nor proceed with the seizure of the king's person till he was assured of the guards' co-operation. It was a check, and he was meditating how to overcome it when a sorcerer, professing to be capable of fashioning in the image of the gods 'dolls of wax' endowed with the power of paralysing the minds and limbs of their temporary owners, came forward. It was the age of sorcery and witchcraft, and Pebekkamen fell to the bait. The dolls were delivered, but their magical quality was never tested. Before the guards handled them, an informer had exposed the conspiracy, and Ramesses had acted. Despite his years, his mind was clear, his resolution unimpaired. He assembled two palace commissions, he ordered the trial of some forty officers of the household and half a dozen maids of honour of the queen. Of the guilt of the leaders there was no question, about their punishment no uncertainty. Pentwëre was allowed to take his own life: Pebekkamen and his confederates died by the hand of the executioner. The papyri break off at this point, and Ramesses' further reaction to the plot is unknown. Possibly death had overtaken him while the trial was proceeding.

Thus passed out of history one of the most illustrious Pharaohs: a ruler whose personality and achievements deserve to be remembered by posterity. He was buried in 'the Harper's tomb', No. 11 in the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings.

CHAPTER II

THE TWENTIETH DYNASTY (*continued*)

Ḥekma'rē'-miamūn Ra'messe (Ramesses IV) c. 1168-1162 B.C.

WITHIN the tomb of his father the heir laid a roll of papyrus,¹ that in part recorded the achievements of the dead king, and in part fortified the right of his eldest son to succeed; by birth the new king's claim was indisputable, for he was born of the great royal wife, probably Esc. Nevertheless, he appears to have felt somewhat insecure on his throne, perhaps as a result of the but recently frustrated palace conspiracy, and in order to emphasize his claim to the succession, Ramesses IV added to the record of his father's life a section professing to be the dead man's last testament. 'Amien-Rē', Ramesses III was made to say, 'has established my son on my throne. He has received in peace my office as ruler of the Two Lands, being seated on the throne of Horus as Lord of the Two River-banks . . . eldest son of Rē' who himself begat him . . . son of Amūn who went forth from his body, being manifest as Lord of the Two Lands like [the god] Tatenen. He is my son in very sooth, one favoured by virtue of his father.' There follows an admonition to the people loyally to serve the new king: 'Do ye obeisance at his feet, kiss ye the earth before him, bow ye down to him, serve him every moment; worship him, adore him, magnify his goodness, even as ye do to Rē' at dawn. Bring to him your produce to his august palace, convey to him the tribute of the foreign lands, lay hold of his words and decrees . . . labour for him in unison in every craft, drag monuments for him, dig for him canals. . . '

So far as we can now tell, the new king succeeded to the throne without strife, though it seems likely that the high priest of Amūn may have taken advantage of the accession of a new and therefore inexperienced monarch to embark on that course of aggrandizement of the Theban pontiffs at the expense of the crown which ultimately not only reduced the Ramesside kings to virtual impotence, but also by the end of the dynasty had split Egypt once more into two independent kingdoms. But

¹ The Harris Papyrus, from which we have already quoted.

these evil events lay yet in the future; Ramesses IV may or may not have had difficulties in his relations with the priesthood, but meanwhile the machinery of government ran on much as usual. The Pharaoh planned and began a funerary temple a little to the north of that of his father, but it would seem that at the king's death the building was not very far advanced, and it was never completed. It was probably for the purpose of obtaining stone for this temple that in year 2 Ramesses paid a personal visit to the 'mountain of Bekhen', the stone quarries lying in the Wādi Hammāmāt, on the route from Coptus on the Nile to the Red Sea, a forbidding region, treeless and arid: a country that no man was likely to visit for pleasure. Otherwise it was no very serious undertaking: only three days' march from Coptus over a road traversed by caravans and free from brigands. Nor was Ramesses IV the first Pharaoh to penetrate the Wādi's gloomy recesses. From the earliest times¹ onwards kings had persistently quarried schist and even a small quantity of granite in the Wādi Hammāmāt to fashion their sarcophagi and so on, and now Ramesses IV had a mind to follow the example. The adventure was successful. He made a circuit of the region, and having satisfied himself of the abundance and quality of the schist, he returned to Egypt in order to organize an expedition, but before doing so he left on the hillside an inscription recording his visit.

The expedition was handsomely fitted out, and towards the end of year 3 an army of priests, officers of state, troops, quarrymen and labourers, numbering nearly 9,000 souls in all, marched out of Coptus. The leader was the high priest of Thebes: a strange appointment, unless made in the hope that Ra'messenakhte, already advanced in years, would not survive the rigours of the expedition. Nor could he have relished exchanging the comforts of Thebes for the hardships of the Wādi Hammāmāt, an exile that could bring neither honour nor profit. But it was not in his power to refuse the king's command: as 'chief of the works' of Amen-Rē', it was for him to be satisfied of the quality of the stone.

A second stela in the Wādi informs posterity of the composition of the party: an inscription that begins with enumerating the names of the chief officers and ends with a record of the number

¹ The earliest inscription in the valley dates from the time of Izezi of the Fifth Dynasty: but the quarries were certainly worked before that time; gold even was worked there.

(900) who perished by the way and from labour in the quarry. The 5,000 infantry were used not only to look after 2,000 labourers but also to work in the quarry themselves. In Ancient Egypt the army was frequently called upon to perform actual quarry work. The labour was arduous, the climate exhausting and, more terrifying still, there was frequently a shortage of food. The supply train consisted of no more than ten carts, each drawn by six pair of oxen, and no doubt Ra'messenakhte and his staff appropriated all to carry their personal belongings. The troops and the labourers had to trust therefore to 'many runners with bread, meat and cakes': a precarious substitute at the best, and the wonder is that in these conditions only 900 men failed to answer the last roll call. Still, the day dawned at length when the leader bade the quarrymen lay down their tools and make ready to depart. It was cheerful hearing. 'Oxen were slain, calves were killed, incense streamed heavenward, wine flowed as if in rivers.' Sacrifices were offered to Isis and Horus and to Min the patron deity of Coptus, and with a light heart and a full stomach the expedition turned its back upon the inhospitable Wādi Hammāmāt.

It is the only recorded achievement of Ramesses IV, and it is not known what use he made of the stone quarried and transported at such pains, though, as already suggested, he may have intended it for his funerary temple. His tomb was cut in the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings at Thebes, and a contemporary plan of it on papyrus has survived. Not a few monuments scattered up and down Egypt bear his name, and some papyri of a business nature are dated in this reign. But the king's prayer for a long life which he voiced on his stela at Abydos was not answered: year 6 is the highest date yet known, and it seems probable that it marks the limit of the reign.

THE LATER RAMESSIDE KINGS

- Ramesses V. Usima'rē'-skheperenrē' Ra'messe-Amenhikhopshef-miamūn
 Ramesses VI. Nebma'rē'-miamūn Ra'messe-Amenhikhopshef-Neterhekōn
 Ramesses VII. Usima'rē'-sotpenrē'-miamūn Ra'messe-Itamūn-Neterhekōn
 Ramesses VIII. Usima'rē'-akhenamūn Ra'messe-Sethikhopshef-miamūn
 Ramesses IX. Neferkarē'-sotpenrē' Ra'messe-Kha'emwēse-miamūn
 Ramesses X. Kheperma'rē'-sotpenrē' Ra'messe-Amenhikhopshef
 Ramesses XI. Menma'rē'-sotpenptah Ra'messe-Kha'emwēse-Neterhekōn-miamūn

1162-± 1090 B.C.

Of the first four of these Pharaohs there is little to record. Except for the first king their origin is uncertain, their personality obscure: their reigns were brief, their tenure of the throne depending presumably upon the favour of the Theban hierarchy. Ramesses V, who was the son of his predecessor, contrived to maintain himself for at least four years, according to an ostrakon at Turin; and he left on the rocks of Silsilah an inscription testifying to his importance. Its words do not err on the side of modesty. It proclaims the king to be 'a monument of gold: he enlightens the whole world. Men were enraptured at his coronation, and the gods delighted. It was he who made the whole world what it is.' But this Ramesses, like his predecessor, had miscalculated his place in the esteem of heaven: the gods would neither guard the tomb¹ he had been at pains to excavate, nor forbid the usurper to substitute his cartouche on its walls for that of the lawful owner. Both the tomb and the funerary temple which he began were taken over by his successor, Ramesses VI, though the temple was never completed. The latter king was more fortunate in that he discovered in a certain Pennē, his deputy in Wawat (Lower Nubia), an official who saved his name from oblivion. From the first to the second cataract, Pennē's word passed as law, as it might well do, seeing that he was also superintendent of the royal mines and overseer of the temples of Horus. No, nor was this all: to guard himself against intriguing subordinates, he had filled all responsible posts in the administration with members of his family. Thus one relative conducted the domestic business of Ibrim, a second that of Derr, the two chief towns of the province. It was a very sensible precaution.

But he had still to reckon with Thebes: the seat of a capricious government that patronized provincial officials one day, dismissed them the next. That fate might be his, the astute Pennē reflected, and he considered how to avert it. The prestige of the throne, though declining in Thebes, still flourished in the remote provinces, and Pennē pondered how to demonstrate his loyalty in practical manner. Further meditation provided him with an idea. Along both banks of the Nile from Ipsambul (Abu Simbel) to Aswān Ramesses II had set up temples in his own honour, and Pennē decided to erect a modest chapel to record his loyalty to

¹ Improperly called the tomb of Memnon from the fact that Ramesses VI, who usurped it, borrowed the prenominal of Amenophis III, the Memnon of the Greeks.

the living king. The shrine was duly built, a statue of Ramesses VI placed within its walls and the revenue of certain lands deeded in perpetuity to maintain the cult.

Presently the news of Pennē's generosity reached the royal ear. It was agreeable hearing, since in these troubled days few men went out of their way to profess respect for the throne, and Ramesses VI deigned to express his approval. The viceroy of Kush was summoned to the palace, and on this dignitary the king laid the charge of delivering to the estimable Pennē two handsome silver vases as token of the royal regard. Simultaneously, Pennē had been constructing an elaborate burial place for himself and his family at Aniba, an outlying district of Ibrim, and within its recesses there exist still reliefs and inscriptions that tell the story of the dedication of Ramesses' shrine. It was a proud day for Pennē when he escorted the viceroy from the river to the village, from the village to the shrine. Passing within, the guest bowed low to the image of the king, read from a roll a list of lands ceded by Pennē, handed to that gratified officer the king's gift and finally bade him listen to the message that accompanied it. 'Hearken, O deputy of Wawat,' he cried loudly enough for the crowd outside to hear, 'these things were spoken in the court of Pharaoh, thy good lord. May Amen-Rē', king of the gods, favour thee, may Harakhte favour thee, may Montu favour thee. Behold I give to thee these two vessels of silver.' No date of Ramesses VI is known, but the considerable number of monuments bearing his name suggest that he was by no means an ephemeral king, and the discovery of the base of a statue of his at Megiddo shows that he still exercised some authority in Palestine.

Of the next two Ramessides, the seventh and the eighth, we know but little; the former probably reigned six or seven years, but of the latter we have no datings at all. The encroachments of the priesthood of Amūn on the royal prerogative grew ever greater, and if their successor, Ramesses IX, contrived to maintain himself upon the throne for possibly nineteen years (*c.* 1142-1123 B.C.?), he did so only by acknowledging the complete equality of the high priest of Amen-Rē' with the ruler. It was a rash admission: to such lengths did the practice go, that in temple reliefs Pharaoh and high priest came to be represented as built in the same heroic mould. It is true that there were still limits beyond which even the high priest was not allowed to

pass, for in this reign we have a record of the suppression of the high priest Amenhotpe, but the setback to sacerdotal ambition was but temporary, and ere long the pressure on the crown was resumed. Yet out of the shipwreck the throne seems to have retained the prerogative of administering justice, and the history of the trial of persons implicated in the robbery of royal tombs on the west bank of the river lends colour to that belief. It is an instructive story that throws light upon the conduct of justice in the Twentieth Dynasty.

The development of Thebes from a provincial to a capital city had brought about the administrative separation of the city proper on the right bank of the Nile, and the necropolis on the left. Both were autonomous: both had their deputies, their secretariats and police, both enjoyed the right of corresponding directly with the royal vizier, the monarch of Thebes. But it was also a division certain to produce intrigue and jealousy, and Thebes proper sneered at its neighbour's arrogant habit of speaking of the necropolis as 'the great and noble burial place of millions of Pharaohs on the west bank'. That mattered little to the west bank, proud of living under the patronage of the king, the inhabitants of the necropolis returned insult for insult. They were a highly organized community of craftsmen and serfs occupied in excavating and decorating the tombs of kings and nobles buried on the west bank of the river. In return for their services they received from the royal purse a free issue of rations and of clothing, but apparently no other remuneration either in kind or in metal. Unhappily the rations were not always forthcoming, and the community at times were within an ace of starvation. On these occasions the craftsmen would march in a body to their deputy crying: 'We have no oil, no fish, no vegetables'. But the deputy could not help: he would pen reports to the vizier, but he could not tell whether they were read or not. But hunger breeds crime, and in the necropolis crime took the form of robbing the dead.

It was a tolerably safe and profitable occupation: the guards were venal, the finds usually easy to market. With the dead were buried their most treasured possessions, since nothing could alter the simple but mistaken Egyptian belief that within the tombs a body was safe from desecration. Throughout the ages that conviction persisted, and the rising of pyramid and rock tombs

continued unpunished until the Twentieth Dynasty caught some of the offenders. The business was then being conducted methodically and scientifically. No longer forcing a way through the entrance, the thieves would tunnel through the rock a passage that would lead them to the burial-chamber. There lay the sarcophagus, and within it the coffin holding the body of the dead king or noble. It was the work of a few minutes to break into the coffin, drag out the mummy, strip the shroud and mask of its gold, snatch the amulets, bracelets and rings from its arms and fingers. No spell or incantation inscribed on the sarcophagus would stay the robber's hand, nor did the familiar curse, 'Whosoever trespasses in this chamber or desecrates my corpse, his soul will be destroyed for ever,' check the vandal.

Meanwhile, Thebes was becoming curious concerning the source of the gold and jewels that were for sale in the city. Outside the vaults of the royal treasuries, gold was a rare commodity, and gossip whispered that gold offered for sale was the plunder of cemeteries from across the river. Psiūr, deputy of Thebes proper, heard the talk, and glad of an opportunity to discredit the deputy of the necropolis, hastened to inform the vizier of his suspicions. He reported that systematic violation of the royal burial-grounds was taking place, declared as an instance that the pyramid of King Djeserkarē, or the first Amenophis, had been sacked, hinted that the criminals came from the necropolis. Possibly the vizier referred the report to Pwēr'o, deputy of the necropolis, for his remarks, or possibly getting wind of his enemy's manoeuvre, Pwēr'o, on his own initiative, demanded an independent inquiry. Whatever the cause, the king charged the vizier, the first scribe of the palace and the controller of the royal household to ascertain and report the facts. These three dignitaries in turn appointed a commission of officials to visit the cemeteries, examine specified tombs and submit their conclusions. The inquiry demonstrated that Psiūr's indictment was too sweeping. Out of thirteen burial-places entered, the commission found that only three had been violated, that the tomb of King Djeserkarē had not been even disturbed. None the less, Pwēr'o had also become suspicious: if his people were not among the actual malefactors, they had perhaps knowledge of the crime, and had connived at it. Convinced of this, he laid hands upon half a dozen doubtful characters, among them being a certain

coppersmith who confessed that he had stolen ornaments from the tomb of Ese, wife of Ramesses III. But when it transpired that the confession was made under torture, the vizier and his two colleagues decided to submit the man to a further test. Blindfolded, the coppersmith was led to the burial-ground. There the bandage was removed, and the vizier addressed him thus: 'Walk before us,' he said, 'to the tomb from which you declare you took away some objects.' The coppersmith obeyed, marched unhesitatingly to a grave that had never been occupied, and cried, 'Behold the tomb in which I was'. Still doubtful, the vizier made a second experiment. The cemetery in question was a large one: but he examined every tomb in it and found none violated or pillaged. That apparently satisfied him of the untruth of the coppersmith's words; perhaps a little easily according to modern ideas.

It was a triumph for the necropolis, the greater in that the vizier authorized the publication of his judgement, and that evening the president of the craftsmen's guild with his scribe crossed the river. Hard by the temple of Ptaḥ, Psiūr, the deputy, accosted them. 'You use marvellous words,' he sneered, when the president protested the innocence of his guild, and cried, 'the statement you have made is false, and you will suffer for it'. Pausing a moment to let the threat sink home, he added, 'and the king's men will destroy all of you'. A silence fell on the listeners, broken in the end by Psiūr's boast that he held in his hand five sworn declarations of the necropolis' guilt. They were rash words: an insignificant scribe standing by overheard them, and indignant that the vizier's judgement should be impugned, reported the speech to the palace, saying, 'It would be a crime for a man like me to hear such things and conceal them'.

Ramesses being of the same mind, straightway bade the offending Psiūr to substantiate or recant his words, and a judicial court sat to take evidence. Its judgement exonerated the necropolis and severely censured Psiūr. It was the ruin of this deputy, and yet the indictment was true enough, as a subsequent trial abundantly testified. On the other hand, Pwēr'o seems to have behaved with greater discretion: he had not excused himself, nor had he misled the commission of inquiry. His was the more arduous office of the two. As deputy of the necropolis, he had to administrate a colony of craftsmen, and also watch over the

scattered pyramids and tombs wherein kings, queens, nobles, officers of the court and humbler folk lay buried. Thus it was no discredit to Pwēr'o's administration if subsequent inquiry disclosed disconcerting facts. Royal tombs unnoticed by the commission had most certainly been pillaged of their contents, and the violaters of the pyramid of Sebekemsaf and his queen were still at large. More unsatisfactory still was the knowledge that tomb robbery was continuing. Clearly, drastic changes in the administration of Thebes on both banks were necessary, and both Psiūr and Pwēr'o seem at this point to have been replaced by newcomers. In the necropolis the new deputy quickly made his presence felt. A number of men were charged with pillaging the burial places of Sebekemsaf, Ramesses II and Sethos I, were brought to trial, soundly beaten and acknowledged their guilt. The vizier, on this occasion, raised no objection to confessions extorted under torture.

Following the death or disappearance of the tenth, the eleventh and last Ramesses ascended the throne, *c.* 1123-1085 B.C. It was a crown shorn of all that made it worth while to wear it, and only the empty titles of royalty now remained to the king. Though still speaking of himself as 'Son of Rē', Lord of the two diadems, Ruler of Upper and Lower Egypt, Making the two lands to live,' Ramesses XI could make neither peace nor war, impose nor remit taxation, appoint nor dismiss high officers of state. Equality no longer contented the hierarchy: unquestioned supremacy in temporal business had become their goal. Once reached, it was fortified by various expedients: notably by making succession to the office of high priest hereditary. Meneptah of the Nineteenth Dynasty was the first king to countenance the practice, and under Ramesses IV it became stabilized. Ra'mes-senakhte, then high priest of Thebes, passed the succession to two sons in turn, Nesamūn and Amenhotpe, and early in the reign of Ramesses XI, Hrihōr, a man of whose origin nothing can be told, succeeded to the office of high priest of Amūn, and in due course he became Viceroy of Nubia and commander-in-chief of the army. In this reign we meet the curious double-dating year 19 of Ramesses XI = year 1 of 'the renewal of birth' or 'renaissance', which lasted some six years, and the coming of this 'renaissance' appears to coincide with the assumption of royal state by Hrihōr, who seems simply to have pushed the legitimate

monarch aside. To such a state of impotence had the bearers of the famous name of Ramesses sunk.

The progressive decline in the royal power which took place after the death of Ramesses III naturally had its repercussions at home and abroad. In Syria all trace of Egyptian authority seems to have vanished quite early, for in the well-known papyrus of Wenamūn, dated in year 5 (of Ramesses XI), we find the princes of the Phoenician ports in possession of an independence which is obviously not of very recent acquisition, and moreover inclined to be distinctly off-hand in their manner to an Egyptian envoy; all relations with the rulers of Egypt are on a strictly business basis. Further south, the finding of the base of a statue of Ramesses VI at Megiddo, to which we have already referred, points to a somewhat longer persistence of Egyptian control over the fertile plains of Palestine, but by the end of the dynasty this too had gone. At home, life and property were rendered insecure by foreign raiders and by civil wars, such as that which ended in the above-mentioned suppression of a high priest, while strikes and riots provoked by the non-payment of wages were by no means unknown among the workmen employed in the Theban necropolis, who were not above earning illicit profits from the national industry of tomb-robbing. Yet the state of affairs within Egypt seems not to have been wholly bad, for apparently during the later Twentieth Dynasty, but prior to the division of the kingdom under Ramesses XI, there was built in the north-western Delta an entirely new town on land reclaimed from a waterlogged condition. This must have been no mean feat of construction, but the facts that it was executed by the superintendent of works of the temple of Amūn at Karnak and that the new town was named after that god indicate sufficiently clearly in whose hands lay the real power.

CHAPTER III

THE TWENTY-FIRST DYNASTY

<i>Kings at Tanis</i>		<i>Priest-princes at Thebes</i>
Smendes (Nesbanebded)	c. 1113-1085 B.C. ¹	{ Hrihōr Pi'ankh
Psusennes (Psebkha'nē) I	1085-1067 B.C.	{ Pi'ankh Smendes (?) Pinudjem I ²
Pinudjem	1067-1026 B.C.	{ Masaherta Menkheperre ³
Amenemopē	1026-976 B.C.	{ Menkheperre' (?) Psusennes Pinudjem II
Siamūn	976-959 B.C.	Pinudjem II
Psusennes II	959-946 B.C.	Psusennes

N.B. The chronology of this dynasty and the correlations between the kings at Tanis and the semi-independent high priests at Thebes are still very obscure, but the scheme proposed above seems to accord best with the data at present available.

ABOUT the year 1090 B.C. Ramesses XI died, and the view generally held is that the high priest Hrihōr by right of the marriage of his father to a princess of the royal house thereupon proclaimed himself King of Egypt as successor to the Ramesside line under the style 'First Prophet of Amūn Hrihōr-siamūn', enclosing his priestly title in a cartouche as if it were a royal prenomē.⁴ As we have already seen, some time before his accession to power, Hrihōr had become commander-in-chief of the army as well as supreme Pontiff and Governor of Nubia, and with armed force at his disposal in addition to his other powers, it was small wonder that he laid claim to the throne. But Hrihōr did not rule a united kingdom, for early in the reign of Ramesses XI—certainly before year 5—the land had split into two separate

¹ This reign overlaps that of Ramesses XI by at least twenty-three years.

² Married a daughter of Psusennes I and succeeded him as king.

³ Assumed the royal style and was virtually independent within his Upper Egyptian principality.

⁴ But see below for the new theory which is due to Professor Černý.

realms, the northern being under the control of King Smendes, seated in the Delta city of Tanis, the erstwhile administrative capital from the days of the Nineteenth Dynasty. Thus we once again see at work that fissiparous tendency which in Ancient Egypt always made itself felt when the central authority was weak; in the present instance it may well have been reinforced by the influence of the great northern priesthoods of Ptah at Memphis and of Rē at Heliopolis, who can hardly have regarded with equanimity the overweening ambition of the Amonites at Thebes. Indeed, according to researches by Professor J. Černý which have not yet been published, there is reason to believe that Hriḥōr's 'reign' was coterminous with the 'renaissance' in the reign of Ramesses XI, and that although for a while Hriḥōr succeeded in pushing his rightful sovereign off the throne, after the usurper's death Ramesses again ruled Upper Egypt for a short while, until he too died. One thing seems clear; neither Ramesses nor Hriḥōr made any attempt to subdue the northern kingdom and thus reunite the land, but, on the contrary, they seem to have maintained amicable relations with Smendes in Tanis, and when at last Ramesses XI had finally passed from the scene, the Theban kingdom, as we shall see, came under, at any rate, the nominal sway of the Tanite dynasty. The experiment at theocratic rule was thus a failure in Egypt, though in later centuries an Amonite theocracy was to flourish at Napata, far away to the south in the Sudan, and right up to the time of the sack of Thebes by the Assyrians, and possibly even later, the Theban priesthood of Amen-Rē remained a powerful political force which had to be placated.

How far Hriḥōr was interested in the mundane matters of administration is not clear, but at least he attempted to bring some order into the chaotic state of the royal necropolis at Thebes, where tomb-robbing was endemic, and in year 6, the only date of his which has survived, he rewrapped the mummies of Sethos I and Ramesses II, which had been violated by the robbers. At least some of his energies were devoted to ecclesiastical affairs. Even before he became head of the state Hriḥōr in his capacity of high priest of Amūn seems to have set on foot an investigation into the condition of Amen-Rē's personal property in Karnak, and the inquiry left an unpleasant impression of negligence and decay. Engrossed in the struggle for political supremacy, his

predecessors had forgotten their responsibilities to Amen-Rē', and already in year 5 of Ramesses XI Hrihōr discovered that the sacred barge of the king of gods could not be launched. Its timbers were rotten, its hull was beyond repair; a new barge had to be built. There was a difficulty in doing so. Tradition required the timber to be cedar, and cedar was procurable only from the Lebanon. In happier days that would have been no obstacle. All Syria was the appanage of Egypt, and the latter had only to express a wish for the Thekel, the Peleset or the Philistines inhabiting the Syrian seaboard to comply. But times had changed and a Pharaoh now would plead to deaf ears. Of this Hrihōr must have been conscious, or he would have charged the king to arrange the matter, and he adopted a new procedure. Amen-Rē' himself would be the petitioner, a temple official the god's ambassador. It was a course the more likely to obtain the desired end, and since the high priest had reason to believe that Amen-Rē' had a strong following in Byblus, the port of the Lebanon timber trade. That, no doubt, was likely enough. Ramesses III in his Asiatic campaign had raised several temples in honour of the Egyptian deity, and the pious Syrian had welcomed the addition of Amen-Rē' to his extensive pantheon. In Byblus stood the most imposing and most popular of these shrines, and from Byblus Hrihōr hoped to obtain the timber he needed.

The first business was the selection of an agent, and Hrihōr's choice fell upon a certain Wenamūn, 'the eldest of the Hall' in the temple of Karnak. Amen-Rē' graciously signified his approval of the candidate, the oracle pronounced a valedictory blessing, the hierarchy handed to him an image of the god known as Amūn of the Road, a talisman guaranteed to assure health and life to its possessor, and Hrihōr provided him with a bag of silver. Thus equipped, Wenamūn set out on his travels, with Hrihōr's final counsel ringing in his ears: he was to obtain the cedar by diplomacy if possible, or in the reverse by purchasing it at the cheapest possible price. All went well in the beginning. At Tanis, King Smendes and his wife, Queen Tentamūn, scrutinized his credentials, entertained him hospitably and arranged his passage on a boat leaving at once for Byblus. But Wenamūn was hardly at sea, before he discovered he had left behind him at Tanis his credentials. Nor was there any prospect of recovering them: for the captain swore he would not put back for the

convenience of any passenger, and the unfortunate Wenamūn had to console himself with the reflection that as 'the messenger of Amen-Rē', he would need no other introduction at Byblus. Dor, an outpost of the Thekels, was his next stopping-place, and there his troubles began. One of the crew decamped with the bag of silver, and Wenamūn claimed the value from the people of Dor. But Bedel, their prince, would admit no liability, seeing that the thief belonged to Wenamūn's party, and nine days went by in arguing the point. Discussion became acrimonious, and more than once Bedel interrupted the persistent Wenamūn with a peremptory cry, 'Be silent'. At last the angry 'messenger of Amūn' became convinced that he was only wasting his time and, leaving the palace, he sailed for Byblus.

His situation now was decidedly awkward: unless a miracle happened the chances of accomplishing his mission were frail. He was musing over this gloomy reflection, when a Dor boat carrying Thekel traders on their return passage from Byblus hove in sight, and with its appearance hope returned. He boarded the stranger and relieved the passengers of their silver, promising restitution when he recovered his own property. That was poor consolation to the victims, and reaching Dor they hurried to the palace to complain of the piracy. Bedel was furious. He summoned his admiral: he commanded him to overtake the Egyptian and to bring him alive or dead back to Dor. The galleys sailed, but the quarry had too long a start, and Wenamūn was in Byblus before his pursuers had sighted Tyre. At Byblus, his ship found a cargo to load to Tanis, and the captain bade Wenamūn seek another vessel to carry him back to Egypt. So the 'messenger of Amūn' found a lodging on shore, hid the silver he had seized from the Thekel merchants and concealed beneath his bed the image of Amūn of the Road. Meanwhile, news of this stranger had spread through the town, and a few citizens curious as to his business called to inquire about it. Wenamūn was very ready to tell the story: how he had come to procure cedar for the barge of Amen-Rē', how he had been robbed in Dor of his silver, how he had made good the loan and how he was confident that the possession of Amūn of the Road would overcome all difficulties. The story was repeated to Zakar-Baal, prince of Byblus, who perceived that patronage of this Egyptian would only involve him in a quarrel with Dor, and to Wenamūn's requests for an

audience he returned the curt answer: 'Get thee out of my harbour'. In the end, the image of Amūn of the Road brought about an understanding with Zakar-Baal. The prince's favourite page was seized with a frenzy, and the afflicted ruler sent for Wenamūn and his divine image. But Wenamūn was in two minds whether to obey the call or not. Having now abandoned hope of accomplishing his mission, he had taken passage on an Egyptian ship, and was only waiting for darkness to stow on board the image of Amūn of the Road before sailing. But he dared not defy the prince of Byblus, and carrying the image, hurried to the palace. The page recovered and the gratified Zakar-Baal promised Wenamūn an audience the following day. It began curtly enough. Zakar-Baal asked Wenamūn for his credentials, and when the Egyptian had to acknowledge he had left them at Tanis, Zakar-Baal said ironically: 'Dost thou indeed speak the truth?' 'Upon what behest hast thou come?' went on the prince. That was the opening Wenamūn courted. 'After the timber for the august barge of Amen-Rē, King of gods,' answered Wenamūn. 'Thy father and thy grandfather used to give it, and thou wilt give it too.' 'Aye,' interrupted the crafty Zakar-Baal, 'but the Pharaohs sent six ships laden with the wares of Egypt,' and the prince read certain entries from his accounts ledgers that demonstrated the truth of his statement. 'It was not a king's gift,' he remarked icily: 'I am neither thy servant nor the servant of him that hath sent thee.' He went on to boast of his possessions, in particular of his ships, when Wenamūn interrupted retorting: 'There is not a ship that belongeth not to Amūn. His is the sea, his is the Lebanon, a plantation for the barge of Amen-Rē.'

His boldness impressed the prince, the pair settled down to business. It was an affair of diamond cut diamond, wherein neither could claim the advantage. Wenamūn had his sacred image but no ship: on the other hand, convinced of the bonafides of Wenamūn, Zakar-Baal was in no mind to lose a good customer. Thus the road lay open to compromise. Zakar-Baal agreed to dispatch a small consignment of cedar to Tanis, and provided that payment was made on its delivery to send further consignments on the understanding that the high priest of Thebes would honour the bills. The timber was felled, and Zakar-Baal took occasion to remind Wenamūn that he had escaped more

lightly than a preceding party of Egyptians bent on the same mission, who had died in Byblus. But Wenamūn refused to look at their graves and counselled Zakar-Baal in turn to record on stone his meritorious deed. It was right, he declared, that posterity should know of it: that Egyptian pilgrims should call down blessings on the prince's head. The idea had not occurred to the prince, and after a moment's reflection he thoughtfully said: 'It would be a great testimony'.

The timber was loaded, the ship put out to sea and Wenamūn was about to follow, when he spied eleven Thekel war galleys cruising outside the port. There was no doubt of their objective, and, running to the palace, he implored Zakar-Baal's protection. Unfortunately, at the same moment the Thekel admiral was inviting Zakar-Baal to hand over the Egyptian, and the prince of Byblus found himself therefore in a difficulty. If he acceded to the admiral's request he was extremely unlikely to get payment for the timber; if he sheltered Wenamūn, the prince of Dor would consider it an unfriendly act. But he was a crafty fellow, and in the end he hit on an expedient that relieved him of responsibility. The culprit, he declared to the admiral, was a 'messenger of Amūn', and as such his person in Byblus was inviolable: but the immunity ceased at sea, and the Thekels might there do what they would like with him. Once rid of the admiral, he humoured Wenamūn, advising him to put out from port under cover of darkness, and slip past the enemy's ships unnoticed, and steer an unusual course to Tanis. Following the advice, Wenamūn put to sea on a blustering and a starless night, and he passed unnoticed through the Thekel fleet. All went well until dawn, when a fierce southern gale sprang up. The ship could not keep its course or the rowers their seats, and only after many days of anxiety did Wenamūn sight land. It was Alasia (Cyprus), inhabited by a race of pirates who would have massacred passengers and crew but for the timely intervention of the local queen. To her Wenamūn appealed for mercy. 'I am,' he cried, 'a messenger of Amen-Rē': surely you will not let your people slay me.' His prayer must have been heard, or his report, so obviously authentic, would not have been written. More than that it is not possible to say. The conclusion of the papyrus is lost, and whether Amen-Rē received the timber and Hrihōr honoured the bill remains uncertain.

Whether the foregoing account is an actual report or perhaps

a personal record of real events, or whether it is fiction possibly based on fact, is a matter of opinion, but there can be no doubt that it presents a faithful picture of the nadir to which Egyptian prestige abroad had sunk. The division of Egypt into two separate kingdoms and the struggle for the crown between Ramesses XI and Hrihōr cannot but have had an evil effect also on the internal fortunes of the realm they ruled. The existence of an independent, even if friendly, power in the north cut off Thebes from direct access to the sea and must have affected trade adversely, while the strife in high places no doubt led to endless abuses and neglect in the administration. It is likely that, with the loss of some of the sources of wealth which in the past had enriched the rulers of Thebes, taxation bore ever more heavily on the people, while the disastrous flood of which we shall speak below was no doubt in part due to neglect of the canals and drains which controlled the irrigation of the country, a neglect which, by reducing the productivity of the soil, will in its turn have adversely affected the national finances, and which will have borne hardly on the peasantry, whose very life depended on an adequate supply of water to their crops. At any rate, we get the impression of a progressive impoverishment and weakening of the Theban province side by side with a growth of turbulence among its people.

Smendes' reputation, on the other hand, had grown with years: his sovereignty was never challenged, his decrees were never questioned. He had steered his kingdom through the first years of his reign shrewdly enough, and the prosperity that followed was abundant testimony of his temperate and discreet rule. His task had been no doubt the easier of the two. Lower Egypt as a kingdom was more compact, its people were less excitable and separation from Upper Egypt had commercially profited it. Markets lost to the first had passed to the second, and Smendes was no ruler to let the advantage slip from his hands. Lower Egypt indeed was on the road to prosperity. Taxes were paid punctually, and the king spent his surplus revenue in widening and enlarging the port of Tanis. In these happy days there was no talk of wars, no whisper of discontent; the throne lent an ear to legitimate grievances, made no distinction between rich and poor, priesthood and laity. But honest administration was not his only preoccupation: at the back of his mind was the

conviction that a divided Egypt could not permanently thrive, and he awaited a favourable moment to bring about the reunion of the two kingdoms. Accident provided the opportunity. Hrihōr was dead, and his son Pi'ankh became high priest, though he laid no claim to royal state. He was, it seems, an unassuming personality, with no ambition to rule nor instinct to govern: helpless, in short, in face of the magnitude of a calamity that befell Thebes in the first summer of his office. The Nile in full flood, racing towards the sea, was carrying a head of water of a height that no living man had witnessed. Day after day the peasantry had lined the crumbling banks endeavouring to prevent them from being broached; day after day they watched with anxious eyes the efforts of canals and drains to discharge the superfluous water that poured through them. Many of the channels did not stand the strain; others better designed succeeded for a time. Among the latter was the great canal excavated by Tuthmosis III to fill the sacred lake of Karnak, and perhaps even to serve as an escape for such an inundation as this. But Tuthmosis' engineers had not envisaged a Nile flood of this height. The intake gave way, and the bed of the canal was soon indistinguishable from that of the river. Within a few hours the eye could see nothing but desolation. As the Nile continued to rise, the flood poured over the country, obliterating familiar landmarks, demolishing shrines of gods and habitations of men, burying cultivable land under a mass of water.

Meanwhile, the impotent Pi'ankh and his priests were on their knees imploring Amen-Rē' to stem the river. Their prayers were of no avail: their god was as impotent as they were, and the flood presently threatened the stability of the great temples. When at last the Nile fell, famine and pestilence took heavy toll of Thebes. In vain the citizens called upon their government to repair the damage: the priests could do no more than wring their hands and invite the pious to put their trust in the gods of Egypt. Brushing aside the foolish counsel, the magistrates and officers of Thebes turned in despair to Memphis: appealed to the wise Smendes for counsel and assistance. The story moved Smendes' generous heart. He turned to his court and cried: 'In the time of My Majesty there has been nothing like it'. And sympathy was not all he gave to the unfortunate people of Thebes. He sent his master builders to re-align Tuthmosis' canal: he dispatched

3,000 labourers to the quarries of Gebelēn for stone to face its banks.

It is possible that Smendes visited Thebes to encourage his people. It is likely enough that the citizens would have had him wear the double crown of Egypt without any reservation. But Smendes was too cautious to accede to the wish unless he could procure a settlement that would outlive his reign, and to achieve it he was prepared to make concessions that would placate the priesthood of Amen-Rē'. The precise conditions of the agreement are unknown: but they must have included at least the following: relinquishing his claim to sovereignty, Pi'ankh preserved his hereditary rights over the high priesthood; accepted as king of a united Egypt, Smendes preserved succession to the throne to his male descendants. To the last condition a stipulation seems to have been made: if the male line failed, the throne would pass to the high priest of the time by right of marriage with, or descent by marriage from, a princess of Smendes' family. To cement the bargain, Smendes offered Pi'ankh the hand of his daughter, and dynastic marriage thus accomplished what violence might not have achieved. It was a tribute to the patient statesmanship of Smendes.

Of the union, Lower Egypt was the predominant partner: Memphis became again the seat of government, Tanis a commercial centre, and Thebes descended to the level of a provincial town. They were halcyon days for Tanis, and its citizens made the best of them. Capital was plentiful, opportunity to employ it profitably abundant. Wide areas in the neighbourhood hitherto uncultivable from swamps and salt deposits were drained and canalized, and from the reclaimed land heavy crops were raised. The Nile was within easy reach, irrigation water at the cultivator's disposal and the climate was mild and salubrious. Trade increased by leaps and bounds through judicious expenditure on public works, the port of Tanis became, by common consent of mariners, the most commodious and safest anchorage in the Eastern Mediterranean, and lay alongside its quays loading and discharging cargo. Tanis was also the goal of the caravan trade: the distributing centre of the merchandize of Arabia and India to all parts of the ancient world.

Smendes (1113-1085 B.C.) only laid the foundations of this prosperity: the task of raising the superstructure lies to the credit

of his son and successor, Psusennes I (c. 1085-1067). It was the easier in that his turbulent neighbours, the Thekel and Pelest or Philistines of the Syrian seaboard, were occupied in a fierce struggle for possession of Canaan with Saul, ruler of Israel. Fortune did not smile upon the invaders. The terrain was unfavourable for the employment of chariotry and cavalry: the Hebrew enemy were masters of the art of guerilla warfare. The triumph was that of Saul: by skilful handling of his meagre resources he forced the Philistines to withdraw, and turned upon the Amalekites in the south. Agag, their prince, was taken prisoner; the Amalekite power was broken. It was a victory that destroyed also the last pretence of overlordship that Egypt had once exercised and still vaguely claimed over Canaan, and Saul could have marched on the Nile, had he so desired. But neither he nor his successor, David, favoured the adventure: the first was no more than a tribal chieftain; the second was occupied in consolidating his patrimony. Smendes may have understood as much, or more likely was too occupied with the commercial development of Egypt to concern himself with the problematical intentions of his neighbours. Psusennes, on the other hand, seems to have better appreciated the defenceless condition of his eastern frontier. There was certainly nothing to stop an enemy but the Pelusiac arm of the Nile, a river fordable for six out of the twelve months of the year; and the new king set about enclosing the temple area of Tanis with a formidable wall sixty feet thick and thirty feet high. Within the wall he rebuilt temples and palaces and constructed a solid tomb for himself within which relics of other burials have been found. Of Psusennes himself the tomb relics give some further knowledge. That he was wealthy, his silver coffin, his golden mask and elaborate golden body covering and his jewellery show. His bracelets tell his mother's and father's name as Mutnūdjem and Smendes respectively. That he had associated with him for a part of his reign one Neferkarē', the cartouches on finger-shaped objects in this tomb tell. The titles in the tomb tell us he considered he reigned over Northern Egypt as well as Upper Egypt.

Meanwhile, Pi'ankh had been succeeded in Thebes by his son Pinūdjem. The new high priest continued his father's endeavour to save royal remains, undertaking the pious task of rebandaging and recoffining the mummies of Amenophis I, Tuthmosis II,

Sethos I and the Second and Third Ramesses, methodically recording in conformity with tradition on linen and wood the dates of reburial. He was half-way through the task when news of Psusennes' death reached Thebes. The dead king had left no heir, and in accordance with Sinendes' settlement the throne passed to Pinūdjem. His right to the succession could not be impugned: he was the grandson of Pi'ankh, the other party in the settlement; he had married Mackarē', the daughter of Psusennes. So installing his son Mazaherta as high priest, he marched in haste to Memphis. It is uncertain whether he ever exercised the duties of royalty, though his name is encircled with the cartouche.¹

As the Twenty-first Dynasty proceeds, its chronology, uncertain from the beginning, becomes increasingly obscure. No two authorities agree, and the student is left to grapple with contradictory conjectures. As regards Pinūdjem, all that can be reasonably said amounts only to this: that as high priest and king he lived forty years (c. 1067-1026 B.C.). His throne years were uneventful: their tranquillity was broken only by a feud with Thebes. Its origin is mysterious, and the stela that records the aftermath sheds perhaps intentionally no light on the point.² Whatever the cause, on the death, soon after his enthronement, of Mazaherta, Thebes fell out with the authority of the Tanite kings, and neighbouring nomes sided with it. A loyal party struck back, executing the ringleaders, banishing their supporters. News of the quarrel trickled in time to Memphis, and Pinūdjem, scenting rebellion, hurried another son, Menkheperre', up the river, armed with plenary powers. Thebes welcomed the envoy: 'Messengers had been sent before him, the families of the city received him with joy'. The clouds had lifted: Mazaherta had disappeared, and Menkheperre' pronounced a general amnesty. His word alone would have been sufficient to recall the exiles but the prudent Menkheperre' preferred that Amen-Rē' should have the credit. In Karnak temple he had an audience with the god. 'Oh! My good Lord,' he cried, 'there is talk, there is complaint on account of thy anger against those in the oases. Look graciously upon them whom thou hast banished, command that no one from this day for ever shall suffer exile.' Amen-Rē'

¹ Drioton and Vandier, *Les peuples de l'Orient Méditerranéen, l'Égypte*, p. 662.

² The Maunier stela in the Louvre.

listened and approved, and Menkheperre' took his brother's place as high priest.

Thenceforth, in the belief of Thebes, Menkheperre' could do no wrong. He had assumed the cartouche with its royal dignity. He was no doubt a shrewd and well-intentioned man, cultivating the affection of the laity, winning the esteem of the hierarchy and under his discreet administration people and priests lived happily. His kingdom extended from Beni Suēf to Aswān, and from the Red Sea to the Oases. But his eye was perpetually on Memphis. Pinudjem's vigour was ebbing, his end approaching, and Menkheperre' anticipated news of his father's death. He was next in succession and confidently expecting a summons to Memphis. Possibly he dallied too long in Thebes, possibly Lower Egypt preferred a candidate of its own election: be that as it may, a certain Amenemopē seized the throne on Pinudjem's death, and Menkheperre' had to content himself with the empty titles of sovereignty. A rupture of relations between Upper and Lower Egypt must have followed: very likely a state of war might have existed between the two divisions for some years. Menkheperre', isolated in Thebes, was at a disadvantage, and in the end he had to submit. Later the pair came to an arrangement: Menkheperre' ceded his title of king; Amenemopē acknowledged the semi-independence of Upper Egypt. That independence did not outlive Menkheperre': his sons and successors, the high priests Psusennes and Pinudjem II, became the vassals of the King of Egypt. Yet another high priest, Psusennes, followed in the office under the reign of the last Tanite king, Psusennes II, and with him the high priesthood passed from the descendants of Hrihōr.

The high priests of Thebes throughout this dynasty seem to have carried out their priestly duties decorously and scrupulously: arresting further desecration of violated royal mummies, and cleansing temple administration from suspicion of dishonesty. Investigation promptly followed any such accusation. A court of inquiry sat to investigate the charge, and Amen-Rē' confirmed or rejected its findings. But the procedure, though simple enough in the instance of a humble offender, was more complicated in that when the accused was a high official. Then Amen-Rē's opinion would first be invited to say whether investigation should be made or not. In the priestship of Pinudjem II, a certain

Dhutmosē, apparently a controller-general of Amen-Rē's domain, was accused of peculation, and Pinūdjem took the opinion of the god on the propriety of convening a court of inquiry. 'Oh! My good Lord,' asked the high priest, reading from a tablet, 'it is said that there are matters which should be investigated in the case of Dhutmosē, the controller-general,'¹ and awaited an answer, but the god shook his head violently, and Dhutmosē escaped trial on this occasion: possibly this highly-placed official had means of controlling the movements of Amen-Rē's head beyond the reach of more humble people.

Tomb relics² at Tanis show that Psusennes' second successor, Amenemopē, was, if himself not less powerful, at least less ostentatious in his house of eternity than his predecessor, Psusennes. On his mummy, found in Psusennes' tomb, were bracelets bearing the cartouches of Psusennes. His statuettes represented a bowed figure with head tilted to the side. So much of him is known, but little else. It may be surmised that his reign (c. 1009-1000 B.C.) was passed in an indolent tranquillity, if the absence of monuments and inscriptions is a guide. That Siamūn, who now occupied the throne for about sixteen years (c. 1000-984 B.C.), restored the glories of Tanis to some extent can be concluded from the many blocks of stone bearing his titles and honorific names. Apparently he completed Psusennes' temple, built around its brick wall a stone wall and also built a temple to Anta, using therefore materials from ancient fanes and leaving foundation deposits of gold, silver and bronze, and of green pottery. His reign is remarkable for the existence of intimate relations with the kingdom of Israel. Analysis of the Old Testament's confused chronology suggests that Siamūn was the Pharaoh with whom 'Solomon made an affinity and took Pharaoh's daughter'.³ In happier days the Egyptian court would have frowned upon such a match: but times had changed, and Siamūn was glad enough to accept a King of Israel as son-in-law. Certainly Solomon, in point of prestige, fortune and strength, was an acceptable suitor. His dominion extended from the Tigris to Gaza, his yearly revenue amounted to over 600

¹ Inscription on a pylon of Karnak: see Naville, E., *Inscriptions historiques de Paynozem III.*

² Montet, *Tanis*, pp. 144 et seq.

³ 1 Kings iii. 1. Authority differs as to whether Siamūn or Psusennes II took and burnt down Gezer, and then presented the town as dowry to the 'daughter of Pharaoh' on her marriage with Solomon (1 Kings ix. 16).

talents of gold, his army included 1,200 chariots and 12,000 mounted troops. Negotiation concerning the bride's dowry was a prolonged affair: and in the matter of bargaining there was probably little to choose between the Egyptian and the Hebrew. In the end the terms were settled thus: Siamūn covenanted to present Solomon with the city of Gezer, an isolated Canaanite stronghold in the heart of the kingdom of Israel, and Solomon agreed to purchase chariots and horses from Egypt. Likely enough each believed he was outwitting the other: Solomon by leaving his prospective father-in-law ignorant of the difficulty of reducing Gezer,¹ and Siamon by concealing his intention to force his intended son-in-law to pay heavily for the chariots and horses.

The bargain was concluded and the bride departed to be lodged 'in the city of David until Solomon had made an end of building his own house'. It was an unpopular decision in the eyes of Solomon's subjects. In the princess' train came a company of Egyptian priests, who sacrificed to their own gods daily in the sight of the worshippers of Jahveh, and even the gentle psalmist was moved to urge the queen: 'Hearken, O my daughter, and consider. Forget thine own people and thy father's house.' The admonition fell on unhearing ears, nor could Solomon's entreaties lessen his wife's stubbornness. In vain he placed her, clad in gold raiment, on his right hand: in vain he sought to please her by reorganizing his court upon the model of the Egyptian. It was all to no purpose: to a princess of Egypt, Jahveh of Jerusalem was of little account compared with Ptah of Memphis. The contest of wills continued, the murmurs of impiety grew louder, till Solomon proclaimed: 'My wife shall not dwell in the house of David, because the places are holy, whereunto the ark of the Lord has come.'²

But the marriage could not keep Siamūn on the throne, nor did Solomon come to his father-in-law's assistance. Possibly Tanis, suspecting on the part of Israel a design to rob Egypt of her sea-going commerce, believed that Siamūn abetted it to please his son-in-law: possibly Siamūn's vigour with advancing years had declined. Whatever the cause, conspiracy was hatched, and a private citizen, styling himself Psusennes II, displaced the

¹ The relief discovered at Tanis of Siamūn killing an enemy, presumably a Philistine, is suggestive. See Montet, *Tanis*, p. 100.

² 2 Chron. viii. 11.

king. The newcomer was soon in trouble. Outside Tanis, he could count on few adherents, and to add to his perplexity the high priest of Thebes, following the example of his grandfather, Menkheperre', declared his independence. His ambition led to his own undoing: within a few months he was contending against Sheshonk, a powerful chief of Heracleopolis in Middle Egypt, and in the contest lost both his life and throne. His tomb found in Thebes gives little further information.¹

It was the end of the Twenty-first Dynasty.

¹ Rowe, A., 'Tanis—Its History and Biblical Associations', *Bull. Soc. Royale d'Alexandrie*, 34, vol. xi, 1, No. 5.

CHAPTER IV

THE TWENTY-SECOND AND TWENTY-THIRD DYNASTIES¹

THE TWENTY-SECOND DYNASTY (OF BUBASTIS)

<i>Kings</i>		<i>High Priests at Thebes</i>
Sheshonk I (Shishak of the Old Testament)	946-925 B.C.	Yewepet, son of Sheshonk I
Osorkon I	925-889 B.C.	Sheshonk, son of Osorkon I
Takelot I ²	889-866 B.C.	Harsiêse I, son of the high priest Sheshonk
Osorkon II	866-836 B.C.	Nimrod, son of Osorkon II
Sheshonk II	Co-regent only	
Takelot II	836-818 B.C.	Osorkon, son of Takelot II
Sheshonk III	818-766 B.C.	Harsiêse II
Pimay	766-760 B.C.	Osorkon and Takelot
Sheshonk V	760-723 B.C.	Harsiêse II again

THE TWENTY-THIRD DYNASTY (OF THEBES)³

Petebast	786-763 B.C.	Harsiêse II
Sheshonk IV	763-757 B.C.	Takelot
Osorkon III	757-743 B.C.	Yewelot, son of Osorkon III
Takelot III	743-723 B.C.	Smendes
Amenrud		
Osorkon IV		

FOR two centuries and more Egypt had trusted defence of her frontier to Libyan mercenaries, while a militia recruited locally maintained security within the kingdom. But the latter had not been very satisfactory. The peasant evaded service in it when he could or, in the reverse, compensated himself by blackmailing his neighbours. Recognizing the unpopularity of the force, the Twenty-first Dynasty had gradually substituted a Libyan for the Egyptian militia, and the procedure had worked well enough in

¹ The dates of these dynasties are extremely uncertain, especially towards the end of the period, which was a time of internal chaos. The figures given here must be regarded only as tentative.

² The discovery in 1939 of the burial of a new king Hekheperre' Sheshonk (see Drioton and Vandier, *L'Égypte*, 2nd edition, p. 660) has further complicated the history of an already obscure period. The position of this king in the dynasty is uncertain, but he may possibly have to be inserted after Osorkon I.

³ Contemporary with the latter years of the Twenty-second (Bubastite) Dynasty.

the beginning. It was cheap and efficient, and it relieved Egypt of an odious form of conscription. Nor was there any difficulty in engaging their substitutes. Libya was a poor country, and its tribesmen, perpetually on the verge of starvation, were glad enough to serve Egypt in return for grants of land that only needed labour to be productive. Moreover, the change suited the crown admirably, since between the frontier garrisons and the new police it could count upon having under its hands the equivalent of a standing army. But that advantage was balanced by a corresponding disadvantage. The Libyan mercenary, on conclusion of his term of service, remained in Egypt, and his descendants so multiplied in the course of time that in the closing years of the Twenty-first Dynasty they became the paramount communities in many nomes of Lower and Middle Egypt. Of these communities, the largest and most formidable was one founded in Middle Egypt by a certain Buyuwawa, whose seventh descendant Sheshonk, or Shishak, in c. 950 B.C. was controlling a principality that extended from Memphis to Hermopolis (El-Ashmūnēn).

This Sheshonk, a shrewd and ambitious man, from the moment he succeeded to his patrimony, had kept an inquisitive eye upon the course of events in Lower Egypt. He had marked the disappearance of Siamūn, and the cold reception accorded to Siamūn's successor, and considered his chances of seizing the crown. They were sufficiently favourable to encourage the design. Outside Tanis, loyalty and affection for the dynasty had waned, and the hour was ripe for the establishment of a new line of kings. There was also the personal factor. As commander-in-chief of all Libyan mercenaries, he could count upon their backing: as the grandson of a Ramesside princess, he had a better title to the throne than the obscure Psusennes II. Thus meditating, he issued from his capital, Heracleopolis (Ihnasyah el-Medīnah in the vicinity of the modern Beni Suēf), and descended on the Delta. His confidence was justified. The Libyan communities flocked to his standard, Memphis and its neighbours welcomed him: Tanis capitulated, and Psusennes fled across the border. In this wise, Sheshonk became master of Egypt.

Psusennes disappears from history, yet relationships between his dynasty and Sheshonk must have ended peaceably since there exists a statue of him restored by Sheshonk I, also a stela of

Sheshonk I in which the king, Psusennes, is called 'The Great God'. He exploited his bloodless victory sparingly: basing his claim to the throne by insistence on his royal descent, placating partizans of the fallen dynasty by marrying his heir to Karamat, the daughter of Psusennes. Nor was the transfer of the court from Tanis to Bubastis, the Pi-Bast of the Egyptian and the Pi-bezeth of the Hebrew, unpopular. As a reputed birthplace of Osiris and as the home of the cat-headed Bast, a beneficent solar divinity, it commanded the respect of the pious: as a favourite resort of earlier kings of Egypt, it still attracted the patronage of the wealthy. Moreover, as a seat of government, its superiority over Tanis was undeniable: in place of bordering a frontier, it lay in the heart of the Delta.

Yet as long as Thebes remained outside his dominion, Sheshonk was only half a king, and the indignity rankled. The cautious Smendes, founder of the Twenty-first Dynasty, confronted with the same difficulty, left the solution in the hands of time, and a less tempestuous prince than Sheshonk might well have done so, seeing that history had demonstrated again and again a divided Egypt could not prosper. But patience and he had little affinity, and rather than wait on the lap of time, Sheshonk determined to unite the two kingdoms by force. So he set out from Bubastis in the fourth year of his reign, careless whether he had to fight his way through Upper Egypt or not. He need have been in no doubt on that point. Upper Egypt after some demur followed the lead of Thebes, indifferent to the pretensions of its high priest, and welcomed the king. As in Lower so in Upper Egypt, Sheshonk cleverly exploited the triumph. He asked no indemnity for his pains, he acknowledged Amen-Rē' to be the king of gods, and in return Thebes accepted Yewepet, his son, as the new high priest. The nomination indicated Sheshonk's political astuteness, since it disposed for ever of the claim of Hrihōr's descendants to the office. Its extinction was no great loss to Egypt: yet posterity is indebted to these high priests for saving from destruction many royal mummies of the past. In particular the priest displaced by Sheshonk deserves to be remembered, since it was he who secretly reburied the bodies of Sethos I, Ramesses II and other kings in the cliffs of Dēr-el-Bahri, where the remains lay undisturbed for a space of thirty centuries.¹

¹ Discovered in 1881, when the mummies were transferred to the Cairo Museum.

Thus far all had gone well with Sheshonk: of counter-revolution, the customary accompaniment of a change of dynasty, there had been no sign, and Sheshonk might have sat comfortably on the throne, but for a disturbing doubt of the Libyan lieutenants. They were a jealous and unreliable company, whose appetite for bribes was insatiable, and a point came when Sheshonk, compelled by an empty treasury to substitute promises for payment, was unable to redeem his word. For answer, the Libyans threatened to disclaim allegiance to the crown, and Sheshonk was faced with an embarrassing situation, though the exact political significance of a rebellion in year 5 in the Oasis of Dakhlah is not clear. The shadow of impoverishment hung over Egypt: trade had shrunk. The merchant would not sell his production at unremunerative rates and the once profitable transit trade had vanished. The last misfortune had reacted seriously upon the royal purse, accustomed to depend for revenue largely upon customs' dues, and Sheshonk was too inexperienced to remedy the mischief. Negligent administration on the part of his predecessors was the cause, as the decline of Tanis indicated. It was a melancholy story: Tanis, once the greatest distributing centre in the Mediterranean, had sunk to the level of a provincial town distinguished only by being the seat of government. Its decline was easy to understand. The fortunes of Tanis depended on keeping the channel between it and the sea free from Nile silt, and that duty had been shamefully neglected. The consequence was inevitable. Timid of stranding their craft, the mariners called no more at Tanis, but discharged their cargo elsewhere. New and more energetic competitors in the sea-carrying trade were also in the field: notably Solomon, King of Israel, intent upon capturing old, and tapping new, markets. Under his auspices the kingdom of Israel had entered for the first time in its history upon a commercial career, ousting Egypt from the profitable Arabian trade. With Solomon was Hiram of Tyre, and the two rulers formed a partnership, based in the beginning upon the exchange of surplus commodities: Hiram being in need of oil and corn for his artisans, Solomon of Lebanon timber to build his merchant ships. At the head of the gulf of Aqaba, the King of Israel created a port that he named Ezion-Geber. There, from timber floated to Joppa by Hiram, and transported overland to the gulf, he built a fleet, manned it with crown 'shipmen that

had knowledge of the sea', lent by the obliging Hiram, and traded the produce of Asia for that of Arabia and Africa.

Unwilling to antagonize Egypt by imposing fresh taxation, Sheshonk bethought himself of an alternative frequently employed by Kings of Egypt to solve their perplexities, and considered a raid upon Syria. Possibly the record on the walls of the temple of Medinet Habu at Thebes of the spoil acquired in Asia by Ramesses III provided the inspiration, possibly Sheshonk calculated his chances of being equally fortunate. They were less promising for more reasons than one. Ramesses had had at his back a strong national army and navy, while he (Sheshonk) must rely for troops upon Libyans of doubtful loyalty and for ships upon cargo-carrying craft of questionable value: and further than this handicap, Ramesses' march into Syria had been unopposed, while Sheshonk would have to reckon with Solomon before reaching his objective. Solomon (c. 970-930 B.C.) by common report was a formidable enemy: overlord of a territory that extended from 'Tipsah [Thapsacos on the Tigris] to Azza [Gaza]', whose favour was sought by all the kings of the earth, and whose strength lay in horse and chariotry, more formidable in numbers than any sovereign of the period put into the field. How far gossip magnified these pretensions, Sheshonk had no means of knowing. The 'affinity' that Solomon had made with Egypt through marriage with a princess of the royal house of Tanis,¹ disappeared on the extinction of the Twenty-first Dynasty, and the gossip rested upon the reports of traders blinded by the magnificence of Jerusalem. Thus at this moment Sheshonk stood in dire need of a Hebrew who could speak with authority on the point. Accident supplied the want: to Bubastis, flying from the wrath of Solomon, came Jeroboam, an Ephraimite, eminently qualified to provide the information required. All, it seemed, was not well with the kingdom of Israel: its foundations were crumbling, its disruption was imminent. The antipathy that had always existed between the northern tribes and Judah and Benjamin, the two southern, had grown into bitter hatred, and in Jeroboam's belief Israel would split into two kingdoms on Solomon's death. Such was his prediction, and he supported it with substantial reasons. Solomon's passion for magnificence was responsible. To entertain a host of parasites and a multitude of

¹ Daughter of Siamun of the Twenty-first Dynasty, *v. supra*.

wives and concubines, to build palaces for their accommodation and to maintain an army out of all proportion to the defence of his country, Solomon had doubled and quadrupled taxes and monopolies until the exhausted peasantry were dying of starvation. The burden had fallen entirely upon the northern tribes, and Rehoboam, Solomon's successor, would have either to redress the grievance, or confront a revolution. Nor was injustice northern Israel's only complaint. Solomon was guilty of apostasy, and his patronage of Chemosh, Astarte, Moloch and other false gods in order to please his 'strange wives' had alienated the pious. Such was Jeroboam's opinion.

Of Jeroboam's credentials to speak so frankly there could be no doubt.¹ He had begun life as a military engineer, and his planning of the defence of Millo, the citadel of Jerusalem, attracted general notice. Under his skilful direction the fortress became almost impregnable, and the well-pleased Solomon promoted Jeroboam to be 'a ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph'.² It was a responsible office, and Solomon probably imagined that the new officer, an Ephraimite, would succeed in squeezing out of his fellow-tribesmen a heavier contribution than in the past. The confidence was miscarried: torn between loyalty to his master and compassion to his own brethren, insensibly Jeroboam permitted the second sentiment to colour his procedure. The news spread beyond the limits of the tribe, and northern Israel presently came to look upon Jeroboam as the champion of its injustice. But none dared voice the thought till Ahizah, a prophet bolder than his fellows, waylaid one morning the treasurer of the house of Joseph on the high road from Jerusalem to Shiloh. Beckoning Jeroboam to follow him into an adjoining field, Ahizah loosed his cloak, rent it in twelve pieces and cried: 'Take these ten pieces: for thus saith the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee'! But the prophecy had an aftermath. Solomon's suspicious ears caught a whisper of it, and Jeroboam was summoned to Jerusalem to answer a charge of treason. In fear for his life, he fled into Egypt.

Since confidence usually begets confidence, it is likely that

¹ The First Book of Kings and the Second Book of Chronicles tell the story of Sheshonk and Jeroboam.

² *i.e.* Ephraim and Manasseh (1 Kings xi. 20).

Sheshonk spoke of his projected raid on Syria, and it is no less likely that Jeroboam discouraged the intention. Had he done otherwise, he would have poorly requitted Sheshonk's hospitality, for no man was better equipped to guess shrewdly the end of such an adventure. Solomon was ageing, and death must soon overtake him, better therefore, the crafty Ephraimite hinted, if Sheshonk awaited the accession of Rehoboam, a prince of less capacity, to join forces with northern Israel, and seize Jerusalem as his share of the spoil. Of war between the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel on the death of Solomon, or of the ultimate victory of the north, Jeroboam admitted to no uncertainty, and he urged Sheshonk to utilize the period of waiting in developing his military resources. The bait was swallowed, the advice accepted. Asking no more questions, Sheshonk set about raising an army of native-born Egyptians, stiffened by contingents of Sukkins and Ethiopians as a counterpoise of the Libyan units.¹

Presently the call came: Solomon was dead, and Jeroboam went back to his own people. His presence was badly needed. Oppression had broken their spirit and, rather than rebel, they preferred to reason with the new king, who had come to Shechem to be crowned.² So to that city Jeroboam and 'all the congregation of Israel' repaired. Shechem was a place dear to the Hebrew mind. There Abraham had pitched his tent, there Joshua had spoken his last counsels, there Israel had acknowledged Jahvah as king and ruler. To the king, Jeroboam spoke thus: 'Thy father made our yoke grievous, make thou it lighter, and we will serve thee.' They were fair words, and Rehoboam bade the assembly return within three days to hear his answer. First he took the opinion of the elder men of the court, the counsellors of his father. 'How,' he asked, 'do you advise that I may answer this people?' And unhesitatingly they replied: 'Speak good words to them, and they will be thy servants for ever.' Well would it have been for Israel had Rehoboam accepted the advice: instead he turned to the younger members of the court, the friends of his youth. Their answer was very different. 'Thus shall thou speak,' they contemptuously cried: 'Whereas my father did load you with a

¹ The estimates of '1,200 chariots and 60,000 horse' by 2 Chron. xii. 5 or that of Diodorus can bear little relation with the truth.

² 1 Kings xii. 1.

heavy yoke, I will add to it. My father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions': and Rehoboam, always swayed by the last counsel he was given, could think of no better answer to give when northern Israel returned to Shechem on the third day to learn his decision. There was no more to say on either side, and departing with the cry: 'What portion have we in David? To your tents, O Israel,' Jeroboam and the people withdrew. It was a declaration of war: Adoram, chief of the tribute, was stoned to death and, concerned about his own safety, Rehoboam hastily withdrew to Jerusalem.

Meanwhile Sheshonk¹ had advanced into Judah and was leisurely plundering cities and villages on the line of the march. It was a satisfying and profitable occupation: invited to choose between ransom and sack, the victim preferred the first alternative, and Sheshonk passed to the next prey. Puzzling as the absence of opposition may have been to the Egyptian king, the explanation was simple enough: the levy of males 'all the house of Judah, with the tribe of Benjamin, one hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men, which were warriors' that Rehoboam had mustered on his return from Shechem had scattered in obedience to a message from heaven. Shemaiah, 'the man of God,' had been commanded to speak thus to all men under arms: 'Ye shall not go up, nor to fight against your brethren the children of Israel. Return every man to his own house.' Shemaiah's hearers asked nothing better: the quarrel with northern Israel was the king's and not theirs.

On top of this calamity came news of Sheshonk's approach, and Jerusalem trembled lest it should be subject to sack. But all was not yet lost. Remnants of the army remained faithful to Rehoboam's cause, and the arrival of priests and Levites, expelled from northern Israel for political reasons, put fresh heart into the civil population. Bethlehem, Hebron and outlying villages were placed in a state of defence: a fresh levy of males was made. It was too late, and brushing aside resistance, Sheshonk's army presently lay within bowshot of the walls of the Holy City. Yet the defence might have held out had not a second warning come from heaven. The bold Shemaiah, once more the divine instrument, addressed the king, priests and people in these words:

¹ It is probable that it was in this crisis that a co-regent Sheshonk was named whose burial found at Tanis is now in the Cairo Museum.

'Thus saith the Lord God, Ye have forsaken Me, and therefore have I let you in the hands of Sheshonk'. The accusation went home: its listeners hung their heads, and murmuring, 'The Lord is gracious,' acknowledged their guilt. That penitent confession saved Jerusalem. 'The word of the Lord came to Sheinaiah: They have humbled themselves, therefore will I grant them some deliverance.' The Old Testament is silent upon the extent of the deliverance, but presumably Sheshonk and Rehoboam reached a compromise. Jerusalem was spared a siege: Sheshonk, in compensation, stripped the temple of its ornaments, the royal palaces of their treasures and despoiled the household guards of their golden shields, relics of Solomon's magnificence.¹ It was his last adventure in war. Presumably he obliged Rehoboam to pay tribute: possibly he retained possession of certain cities as a guarantee of Israel's good faith; but beyond that, his withdrawal from Asia was permanent, and he devoted himself thenceforth to the administration of his own dominion. His interest in all that pertained to Egypt was universal: a reformer rather than an iconoclast, he re-introduced the military castes, separated spiritual and temporal authority, readjusted the incidence of taxation, embellished temples and shrines of the national gods. The favour he showed to Karnak arose no doubt from ambition to follow the example of preceding kings, and immortalize his memory by inscribing on its walls a record of his own campaign; so in the twenty-first year of his reign he explored the temple of Amen-Rē with the design of finding a suitable place to commemorate his triumph. Its priests received him with enthusiasm, confidently expecting a handsome addition to the revenues of their god in accordance with precedent. But precedent counted little with the frugal Sheshonk. If a Tuthmosis or a Ramesses squandered treasure painfully acquired in war upon a hierarchy, Sheshonk had better use for it: he was prepared to add a shrine to Karnak and offer a modest tribute to Amen-Rē, but further than that he did not promise to go.

Eventually his eye fell upon an angle that the temple of the third Ramesses formed with a pylon of the hypostyle hall, and there he decided to raise another pylon² to be entered through

¹ It is suggested that part of the golden jewellery found in the tomb of another Sheshonk at Tanis and now shown at the museum in Cairo may be from this source.

² Commonly known as the Bubastite Gate.

double doors 'of myriad cubits', leading to a court, as the memorial of his reign and his campaign. Meanwhile, an army of labourers were on their way to Silsileh to procure stone. Yewepet, the high priest, had chosen the quarry: Haremsaf, the master-builder of Amen-Rē', superintended the work. 'All that thou didst say, O my good Lord, has come to pass,' cried the jubilant architect on his return to Thebes, and Sheshonk, overcome by a fit of unwonted generosity, handsomely rewarded Haremsaf for his pains. Upon the new pylon and the walls of the court are reliefs and inscriptions that record Sheshonk's victories: reliefs that have no great artistic value, and inscriptions composed of stilted and stereotyped phrases. Amen-Rē' is pictured as leading five lines of prisoners of war, Mut follows with a further five rows, each captive symbolizing a city taken in course of the campaign. Unhappily time has obliterated whole lines of the text, and of more than 150 names of towns once legible, less than half to-day only can be distinguished.¹

History has been unkind to the achievement of Sheshonk: satisfied with narrating his success in war and hurrying to tell the declining fortunes of the dynasty he founded, it forbears to speak of his successes in peace. The neglect is pardonable. Authentic history is lacking, and the reconstruction of Sheshonk's administration is a doubtful business. But this much of the man himself at least may fairly be said: his withdrawal from Asia indicates not only a self-control unusual in a sovereign of his period, but also evidences that the welfare of Egypt was of greater importance to him than the vanity of conquest. He lusted neither after empire, nor entangled himself in questionable alliances, and thus bequeathed to his successor a patrimony unencumbered with political embarrassments. He was, in short, a remarkable king, whose personality deserves to be remembered. If he came to the throne by usurpation, he atoned for the offence by prudent government: if he robbed Jerusalem, he did not squander the plunder.

His son Osorkon I (c. 925-889 B.C.) had now succeeded to the throne. A close alliance with the Theban pontiff his brother is

¹ Breasted, *Ancient Records*, IV, § 711, states that of the seventy-five names preserved, seventeen only can be located with certainty, and two more with some probability. Fourteen of these cities seemed to have been part of northern Israel, the remaining five of Judah: evidence that Sheshonk was not particular whether he plundered an ally or an enemy.

suggested from the fact that Yewepet's successor in the pontificate was the king's son Sheshonk (grandson of Psusennes II). This high priest and king bore the title of 'Master of both South and North' and 'Great chief of the troops of all Egypt'; he had also the right to use the royal cartouche. In turn his son Harsiese I succeeded to the royal titles, holding them throughout the last years of Osorkon I, his grandfather, and of Takelot I, his uncle.

Like his father, Osorkon had little respect for either tradition or practice, and was careless whether he offended either. It had been the custom that the heir should go to Thebes as high priest and viceroy of Upper Egypt: a procedure that had no doubt certain merits since it was a compliment to Thebes and provided the heir with some practical experience in the art of government. But the picture had its reverse side from the point of view of the individual most concerned. Communication between Upper and Lower Egypt was slow and precarious, and it had happened in the past that a new king making his way to Bubastis found his way barred by a rival. That was an accident that Osorkon now resolved should not befall his son Takelot, the beloved child of his wife Ma'kama, and keeping the young prince at his side, he dispatched to Thebes another and less important member of his family, Sheshonk.

Throughout his reign, indeed, Osorkon I seems to have taken delight in running counter to tradition, and the distribution of treasure among the various priesthoods of Egypt to commemorate his succession to the throne was only one of many instances when he deliberately reversed royal procedure. In this matter he could afford to be generous, since he had inherited not only a throne, but also, what was less usual in his time, a well-filled treasury. That much he owed to his prudent father, who had been in no mind to squander the spoil of Jerusalem upon religious corporations that contributed nothing to the campaign. Hitherto the priests of Thebes had claimed the larger share of the king's benevolence, while these of Memphis and Heliopolis, more ancient foundations, had to be content with what was left. The practice appropriate enough so long as the court resided at Thebes and all Egypt acknowledged Amen-Rē as king of gods, became less so once Tanis and Bubastis replaced Thebes as the seat of government, and when the pious followers of Ptah and Harakhte, the divinities of Memphis and Heliopolis, clamoured for a fair

division of the royal gifts, Osorkon thought the complaint reasonable. Politically the wisdom of his decision was more doubtful. It offended Thebes, and in course of time led to unforeseen reactions.

For the rest, Osorkon's reign was uneventful, unless he is the Zerah of chapter xiv of the Second Book of Chronicles, who, in the first years of the eighth century before Christ, invaded Judah at the head of an army of Ethiopian and Libyan mercenaries. Though all commentators will not agree, it seems reasonable to suggest that Zerah is only a Hebrew corruption of Osorkon, and that Asa, King of Judah, had declined to honour the covenant made by Sheshonk with Rehoboam. A preceding paragraph has indicated the probable terms whereby Sheshonk agreed to withdraw from Jerusalem, and it would be in keeping with Asa's warlike spirit to have left Egypt with a choice between losing the tribute or compelling its payment by force of arms. The moment was favourable to deliver the ultimatum. Ben Hadad of Damascus held in check northern Israel, that implacable enemy of the kingdom of Judah, and Asa employed the respite in building on his frontier 'fenced cities', provided with 'walls and towers, gates and bars', and in raising an army of spearmen out of the tribe of Judah and archers out of the tribe of Benjamin. Thus armed, he hurried from Jerusalem to give battle to the invader, and at Mareshah, in the valley of Zephatah, the two antagonists met. Zerah, timid perhaps concerning his communications, retired through Gaza, and on the field of Gerar, Asa won a convincing victory. Outfought, Zerah gave way, and pressing pursuit Asa turned a retirement into a rout. The Ethiopian and Libyan levies broke and fled; their baggage and treasure fell into Asa's hands. So much may be gathered from the Second Book of Chronicles, and the narration seems to bear the impression of truth. Unhappily no independent testimony exists to confirm or deny the version.

Of Takelot (c. 889-866 B.C.), son of Osorkon I by his Libyan wife Shepses, little is known beyond the fact that midway in the reign he nominated his heir Osorkon II as co-regent. It was fashionable enough in earlier times: introduced into Egypt perhaps by the twelfth dynasty and pursued spasmodically by succeeding dynasties less perhaps out of paternal affection than from a natural instinct to watch the conduct of the crown prince.

The intrigue that distinguished the Egyptian court at all times had a habit of centring round the person of the heir to the throne, and no father could ignore its existence. Perhaps in this instance suspicion was unjustified, since the son's interest throughout life was concentrated wholly upon religious foundations within easy distance of the court. At Tanis itself he built a temple, using therefore the materials of earlier builders, yet substituting the god of his chief worship Amūn for that of the past eras Seth, and scratching out the cartouches of Ramesses to place his own titles therein. The enthusiasm was commendable enough in the person of a crown prince desirous of some occupation, was less so in the instance of a sovereign whose administrative responsibilities extended from the sea to Nubia, and the declining fortunes of the dynasty originated perhaps in Osorkon's neglect throughout his reign (c. 866-836 B.C.) of the elementary duty of a king. The neglect would have mattered less had he treated the national gods of Egypt impartially, as his grandfather had done. No doubt the latter had favoured Ptah and Harakhte at the expense of Amen-Rē': but at least he had not ignored the last, nor had he wasted his patrimony in subsidizing decayed and decaying priesthoods, because they lay in the neighbourhood of the capital. The grandson's indifference to priesthoods and temples outside Lower Egypt led to angry murmurs, and the timid Osorkon to quiet them hastily nominated his son Nimrod to officiate as high priest in Heracleopolis as head of the clergy of Amūn and promised Thebes immunity from royal taxation: but matters had gone too far by then for appeal or concession to produce result, and the unhappy king fell back on reminding the members of his family of the necessity of loyalty to the dynasty. Such seems to have been the motive of a prayer inscribed on the base of a statue recovered from the ruins of Tanis, addressed to his issue 'the seed that has come from my limbs, the hereditary princes, the high priests of Amen-Rē', the chiefs of Me, the prophets of Arsaphes'.

If Osorkon II passed his time in building chapels and shrines in Lower Egypt, it must be confessed that his reconstruction and embellishment of the temple of Bast repaid the labour, as Herodotus' judgement, four centuries later, that 'other temples may be greater and have cost more to build, but there is none so pleasant as that of Bubastis',¹ abundantly testifies. It was no doubt a

¹ *Herodotus* II, 137.

remarkable achievement, and in view of the prestige of the shrine a task worth the pains of accomplishing. But the temple of Bast had known many vicissitudes. Raised in the days of the Fourth Dynasty, patronized by the Twelfth, demolished by the savage Hyksos a thousand years later, rebuilt and rededicated to Amen-Rē' by Amenophis II and finally razed to the ground by the iconoclastic Akhenaten, the history of the temple of Bast was almost the history of dynastic Egypt. At Osorkon's bidding it was now in the fair way to regain its ancient fame and once more to become the goal of pious pilgrims. Situated in the heart of the city, yet visible from all points of the compass, approached by spacious and shaded roads, and flanked by two deep and wide canals and enclosed by a low wall, decorated with coloured reliefs, its beauty justified no doubt Herodotus' glowing verdict. To crown his labour, Osorkon in the twenty-second year of his reign added a handsome court that he named the hall of the Sed Festival, and within its precincts he celebrated the anniversary of his divinity as an incarnation of Osiris. From earliest times the Sed Festival¹ had played an important part in the life of a Pharaoh, though its significance is still a matter of conjecture and its ritual still obscure. This much, however, seems clear: from the performance the Pharaoh recovered his youthful vigour and received from heaven promise of 'millions of years' of life on earth. Unhappily rejuvenation was a gift that the gods of ancient Egypt withheld even from kings, and as old age crept on each Pharaoh felt the need of celebrating a second Sed Festival.

It was not given to Osorkon II to repeat the experience:² of his sons Sheshonk II and Takelot II (c. 836-818 B.C.), the first, coregent with his father of the kingdom of Egypt, died without reigning, and the second succeeded to an unpromising patrimony. Little is known of this king or of his successors in Bubastis (Sheshonk III,³ c. 818-766 B.C.; Pimay, c. 766-760 B.C.; and Sheshonk V, c. 760-723 B.C.) beyond their names and years of reign. They continued to describe themselves as Lords of the Two Lands: a vainglorious boast since their authority was limited now to the territory that lay between the Tanitic and Pelusiatic

¹ Moret's *Le Nile et la Civilisation Égyptienne* and Naville's *Festival Halls of Osorkon II* provide further information upon this mysterious festival.

² The burials of both Osorkon II and his young son the high priest Hor Nekht were found at Tanis. See Montet, *Tanis*, pp. 107 *et seq.*

³ His tomb was found at Tanis.

branches of the Nile. Outside that narrow dominion the throne's rescripts and prerogatives were unheeded, for Egypt was drifting again into complete anarchy. Heracleopolis, the ancestral house of the dynasty, continued perhaps to maintain relations with Bubastis, but Sais, Athribis and other popular centres ignored the dynasty and the agent of government.

From the annals of Osorkon, high priest of Amūn in Thebes, son of Takelot II, successor of Nimrod son of Osorkon II, there is hint of trouble and revolt throughout the country. Osorkon, who had been enthroned at an early age in his father's eleventh regnal year, was compelled twice over to exile. In his sixth year of power, the fifteenth of Takelot II's reign, civil war drove him south for ten years. An amnesty sanctioned by Amūn marked the moment of his return. Yet ten years later once more he disappeared for twenty years. The country was evidently still in a disturbed state after his second reappearance in the twenty-sixth year of the reign of Sheshonk III. This anarchy was not easily quelled for an inscription of the thirty-ninth year of this king's reign tells that Osorkon and his brother Bekenptah, chief commander of the army of Heracleopolis, together celebrated the feast of Amūn in Thebes, and together destroyed all those who fought against them. Shortly after this, Osorkon's death made place for the return to power of Harsiese II, whose reign as high priest is now placed in the regnal years of King Petebast (c. 786-763 B.C.).

Now came about yet fresh division of Egypt into two kingdoms, and the simultaneous existence of two independent dynasties; namely, the Twenty-second in Bubastis and the Twenty-third in Thebes. The names of the kings of the Twenty-third Dynasty—Petebast, Sheshonk IV, Osorkon III, Takelot III, Amenrud and Osorkon IV—would suggest that these kings are of the legitimate Bubastic line. That the two dynasties were on terms of amity is probable since the son of Sheshonk III commanded the troops at Thebes during the reign of Petebast, while in the same reign the high priest Harsiese II obtained the cartouche of royalty; he, it will be remembered, had held office under Sheshonk III. It was in the reign of his successor, the high priest Takelot, that King Sheshonk IV succeeded, and in his turn Osorkon III. This last was no doubt a remarkable and resourceful prince. He appointed his sons Yewelot and Smendes, possibly

also Yewaskis, son of Yewelot, in turn to the high priesthood at Thebes, while by his care of the temple at Luxor, evinced at a time of high Nile when serious devastation had occurred, he ingratiated himself with the people of Thebes.

No less impressive was his revival of a practice introduced by Amenophis I of the Eighteenth Dynasty presumably for his own purposes. Attached to the temple service were a company of singing women customarily known as the concubines of Amen-Rē': clearly an honourable distinction, or the first concubine would not have been usually the wife of the high priest. But in this feminine hierarchy Mut, the consort of Amen-Rē', had no representative, and it must have occurred to Amenophis that the appointment of his mother Aḥmosē Nofretere as Tei Nūter or spiritual wife of Amen-Rē' would both fortify his own pretensions to divinity and curtail the high priest's authority. Later the ambitious Hatshepsut usurped the distinction, and in turn conferred it upon her daughter Nefrurē'. Osorkon now went a step further: the office of the high priest was suppressed, his daughter Shepnupet became Tei Nūter, the administrator of Amen-Rē' 's revenues and interpreter of his wishes. Takelot III followed his father, and Amenrud, named in the chapel at Karnak, in turn succeeded. Osorkon IV was the last of the dynasty, and it was he who reigned in Bubastis in later years.

About 723 B.C. the Twenty-third Dynasty came to an abrupt end: Kashta, a prince of Libyan origin issuing from his capital Napata, descended the Nile and occupied Thebes. It was a strange revenge on the part of time. For many centuries Ethiopia had been a productive and tranquil appanage of Egypt, and its importance was recognized by the fact that it was governed by a vizier, the equal in rank and authority of his colleagues the viziers of Upper and Lower Egypt. Up to a point its history is pretty clear. Astride the trade route to the Sudan, the permanent occupation of this hinterland had seemed to the kings of the Twelfth Dynasty a matter of primary interest. Semnah, midway between the second and third cataract, had been held by the third Sesostris, and its safety assured by a chain of forts in rear. The Thirteenth Dynasty pushed the frontier further south, and to emphasize the permanency of their occupation had replaced the god Khnum of Elephantine established by their predecessors, by Amen-Rē'; but in the dark days that followed the death of

Ramesses III, Egypt's hold over the territory beyond the second cataract slackened. The vizier presumably was withdrawn, and a local family of Libyan origin claimed to be the sovereigns. So much Reisner's excavations in the neighbourhood of Gebel Barkal of the fourth cataract show,¹ and the attractive theory widely held that Kashta's forbears were dispossessed descendants of Hrihōr, the priest-king of the Twenty-first Dynasty remains unproved. No doubt the type of government that existed in Napata was responsible for the theory. Like Thebes, it was purely theocratic, and the ruler no more than the spokesman of a powerful hierarchy. Nothing was attempted without constantly consulting the local oracle of Amen-Rē: an oracle that interpreted the royal dreams and visions, that approved or condemned peace or war, that blessed and cursed princes and people indiscriminately.

Kashta did not push his arms further north than Thebes: beyond obliging the reluctant Shepnupet to adopt as successor his daughter Amenardis in the office of Tei Nūter and leaving a garrison to support her pretensions, he seems to have permitted Thebes to manage its own domestic affairs. None the less, this occupation foreshadowed a profound political change. Hitherto the last word in government had been spoken from Upper or Lower Egypt: from now it would be said in distant Ethiopia. Such was the moral of Kashta's successful campaign, and his son-in-law and successor, Pi'ankhi (c. 751-716 B.C.), husband of the high priestess Amenardis, drove home the lesson. The new king was in no hurry to deliver the blow. The resources of Napata had been strained, the task of maintaining the garrison of Thebes and a long line of communications was heavy. But as the reign wore on the difficulties lightened, and Pi'ankhi steadily advanced his outposts as far north as Asyūt. There he was in touch with Middle Egypt, and in a position to appreciate the situation in Lower Egypt. It was gloomy enough. Osorkon IV, the last of Petebast's legitimate line, was virtually a prisoner in Bubastis, while royal authority had passed into the hands of four formidable dynasts: Tefnakhte of Sais, Yewepet of Mendes, Pefnefdibast of Heracleopolis and Nimrod of Hermopolis (El-Ashmunēn). Of the four, Tefnakhte was the most formidable, since Memphis, Athribis and other important centres in

¹ Reisner, *Bull. Mus. of Fine Arts* (Boston), Nos. 80, 89, 97, 112 and 113.

Lower Egypt acknowledged his hegemony. That success increased his ambition, and he projected extension of his sovereignty to Middle and Upper Egypt. Thus about the year 723 B.C. he concentrated his ships and men at Memphis in preparation for the campaign. All went well in the beginning. Heliopolis, Moeris and neighbouring nomes joined the confederation, and when Nimrod, dynast of Hermopolis, followed the example, Tefnakhte would have advanced to Thebes without anxiety about his communications, but for the unexpected defiance of Heracleopolis. Pefnefdibast, the dynast, could come to no understanding with the enemy: as a lineal descendant of the great Sheshonk was unlikely to take orders from an upstart prince of Lower Egypt. Tefnakhte was forced to halt at the beginning of his advance to invest Heracleopolis and await the result of a siege. It was a delay that cost him dear.

Memphis was a long way from Napata. News travelled slowly, and vague rumours of a military concentration in Memphis did not disturb Pi'ankhi in Napata. Thinking the concentration only implied a raid on Middle Egypt and concerned only about the safety of Upper Egypt, he remained unmoved, till a disquieting message from Purem, his commander-in-chief in Thebes, brought about a true appreciation of the danger. Purem was uneasy. Hermopolis was breathing defiance, neighbouring nomes were arming: further north the enemy's numbers were swelling, and the reduction of Heracleopolis would only be a matter of days. In short, unless heavily reinforced, Purem did not dare take the offensive. Pi'ankhi sent the troops with orders to allow the enemy to muster his full forces before attacking, so as to destroy them at a single blow. Once reinforced, Purem, full of fight, embarked his force and routed an enemy squadron. Two days later he gave battle within sight of the walls of Heracleopolis to the besiegers, and won a signal victory for Ethiopian arms. Tefnakhte fell back on Memphis. Heracleopolis was relieved.

Purem's strategy had been sagacious. Heracleopolis was the key to the situation: the rout of the besieging force was the primary objective, the reduction of Hermopolis and other disaffected centres a secondary. So much had been clear to this sagacious commander, and he was now in a position to undertake the second operation. But his stay at Heracleopolis, protracted

perhaps in the expectation of a counter-attack, displeased the impatient Pi'ankhi. 'Have they allowed a remnant to remain over of the armies of Lower Egypt, or allowed any of them to escape to tell of his campaign?' he cried indignantly to his court; 'I swear, as Rē' loves me, as my father Amūn favours me, I will sail down the Nile myself, I will overthrow [the walls] which he [Nimrod, dynast of Hermopolis] has made, I will make him abandon fighting for ever!' and he made ready to depart. Meanwhile, seeing that Tefnakhte remained inactive in the north, Pureau redoubled his efforts, and after taking Oxyrhynchus, Tehna and Hipponon, invested Hermopolis by land and water. Blockade was as much as he could manage for the moment. The relief of Heracleopolis had been a costly operation; he could not afford to risk an assault. News also that Pi'ankhi was on his way north was a further reason for delay, and Pureau sat down to await the king's arrival. His patience was sorely tried. Despite his fiery words, Pi'ankhi did not hurry to the front. First Napata persuaded him to participate in the ceremonies of the New Year, next Thebes begged him to preside over the Festival of Opet.

It was a popular festival: the day or days when Amen-Rē' transferred himself from Karnak to Luxor, a pilgrimage intended possibly to commemorate his spiritual marriage with the wife of the high priest. Either in person or by proxy, the king was the central figure of the ceremony, and the presence of Pi'ankhi on this occasion no doubt was highly gratifying to the people of Thebes. The procedure began at Karnak with a procession of acolytes bearing the sacred boat, followed by the high priest and prophets escorting the images of Amen-Rē', Mut and Khonsu, descending the causeway that led to the river's edge. There the flotilla was formed up: the divine barge in the van, the royal a little astern, and in this order, to the beating of drums, tinkling of cymbals and cheers of the spectators the flotilla moved slowly to Luxor. At the temple of Opet the images were carried into the sanctuary, the bearers withdrew and the king remained alone to pay the customary offerings. Both may have been prudent invitations to accept: obviously the second was, since Theban affection for Ethiopian rule must have been doubtful. But valuable months were wasted, and Hermopolis made use of them to strengthen its defences.

Backed by his new levies of Ethiopians, Pi'ankhi took stock of

the situation, and his curt questions: 'Is the dragging on of your campaign slackness in my service? Has an end [not yet] been reached?' were hardly fair to Purem or to the army that had been marching and fighting for months on end. None the less, Pi'ankhi stiffened the spirit of the besiegers, and preparations were made to carry Hermopolis by storm. But the city was already doomed. Menaced by famine, reeking with the stench of the unburied dead and without hope of help, it capitulated unconditionally.

Anticipating death, Nimrod sent his wife to plead for mercy. Her supplication was unnecessary, since Pi'ankhi was neither a butcher nor an iconoclast. It was not his custom to massacre prisoners of war or to raze to the ground a town that had defended itself bravely: but the legitimate reward of a conqueror was another matter, and Pi'ankhi ruthlessly stripped the granaries of grain, the palace of treasure and the stables of horses. The condition of the animals shocked him, emaciated and uncared for, they could hardly stand, and Pi'ankhi took Nimrod to task for neglect. But the fault was not his, but that of the blockade: such had been its rigour that for many days there was no provender for man or beast in Hermopolis.

Flushed with victory, Pi'ankhi swept down the Nile and fell upon Memphis. It was a fortress little likely to listen to any terms of surrender: defended by three sides by lofty walls manned by a stout-hearted garrison of 8,000 archers and spearmen, and protected on the fourth by the Nile. 'Be of good cheer,' had been Tefnakhte's last words, as he departed to raise more levies, 'the river flows on the east side, and attack need not be feared.' He slipped out of Memphis only just in time; a few hours later Pi'ankhi's war galleys and transports hove in sight, passed the city and anchored off its northern extremity. Examination quickly showed that Memphis was impregnable at that point, and Pi'ankhi called a council of war to find an alternative. Deliberation was sterile, the council could think of nothing better than blockade and formal siege. It was advice that Pi'ankhi scorned, since it would surrender the initiative to the enemy and provide Tefnakhte with time to rally all Lower Egypt to his cause. Always favouring the bold course, he determined to attack Memphis from the east.

Sharing their leader's belief in the invulnerability of Memphis

on that point, the enemy engineers had neglected to provide for the defence of the fortress' harbour, and noting the omission, Pi'ankhi under cover of darkness moved his flotilla upstream. By an adroit use of his light-draught ships, he captured and towed out of the harbour a number of capacious barges that lay at anchor within. These craft he filled with his own troops, and sent them back with orders to rope their bows to the houses that crowded the river bank. It was an operation admirably conceived and boldly carried out. The troops leapt on shore, and penetrating the city, they entrenched themselves and awaited the arrival of reinforcements. Soon every man at arms Pi'ankhi had under his hand was in the battle, and the assault was pressed home. Too late, the Memphis commander hurried up contingents from the other quarters of the city: the enemy clung to the initial advantage they had secured, and by dusk Pi'ankhi was master of the fortress.

Once again he exploited his triumph sparingly, attributing it not to his own prowess, but rather to the favour of Ptah and Amen-Rē'. Nor did he exact reprisals or punish enemy commanders: and if he despoiled Memphis, he distributed a share of the booty to the two gods. Possibly its people would have rejoiced had this noble prince stayed awhile in their company, but that Pi'ankhi could not do so long as his enemy Tefnakhte was still in the field. So he pushed to Heliopolis, entered the temple of the Obelisks, broke through the double doors of the sanctuary and stepped within to look upon the image of Rē'. Closing the great doors, he set his seal upon their fastening, crying to the high priest, 'Let no other king enter'. Athribis was the next objective. Outside its walls stood Petēse, dynast of the city, and within a little company of princes headed by King Osorkon himself. Abasing himself, Petēse craved forgiveness, and proclaiming that all he had was at the disposal of his Majesty, he implored Pi'ankhi to respect Horus, his patron god.

It was the end of the campaign. Resistance was over, and Tefnakhte, a fugitive on the shores of the Mediterranean, begged forgiveness. 'Terror,' he confessed, 'is in my heart. I cannot sit down in the beer-hall, the harp is not played for me. Take for your treasury my gold and precious stones and the best of my horses. Let an envoy come to me in haste and drive out fear from my heart; then will I proceed to the temple before him and I will

be absolved by a sacred oath.' Pi'ankhi listened to the prayer, and dispatched Puren to administer an oath of allegiance.

Such is the story of this romantic campaign: a story recorded on a granite stela¹ that Pi'ankhi had erected in Napata. It is a picturesque and probably faithful narrative of an adventure that indicates not only Pi'ankhi's military genius but also a certain nobility of mind. His treatment of conquered cities and of prisoners of war is unusual in the annals of Ancient Egypt: he punished neither the first by sack nor the second by either death or mutilation. In a word, he was a magnanimous conqueror and illustrious commander.

¹ In the Cairo Museum.

CHAPTER V

THE TWENTY-FOURTH AND TWENTY-FIFTH DYNASTIES

THE TWENTY-FOURTH DYNASTY OF SAIS

(Contemporary with part of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty)

Tefnakhte	c. 723-715 B.C.
Bocchoris (Bekemanef)	c. 715-709 B.C.

THE TWENTY-FIFTH DYNASTY (ETHIOPIAN)¹ OF NAPATA

Pi'ankhi, King of Ethiopia	c. 751-715 B.C.
Shabako	c. 715-703 B.C.
Shabataka (Shebitku)	c. 703-691 B.C.
Taharqa	c. 691-665 B.C.
Tanutamun (Tanwetamani)	c. 665-663 B.C.

AN imperial-minded prince at this point would have transferred his court from Napata to Memphis, and carried his arms into Asia. But Pi'ankhi's taste for adventure had been satisfied: he had had his fill of fighting and, bent upon celebrating his triumph by raising a temple to Amen-Ré', he hurried home. Upper Egypt welcomed the returning king enthusiastically. The river banks were lined with spectators crying: 'O Mighty mighty Pi'ankhi: happy the heart of the mother who bore and of the father who begat thee,' and Pi'ankhi may well have believed the judgement sufficient compensation for the pains of the campaign. Such was his hurry to be gone that he left his son Shabako no instructions concerning the settlement of Lower Egypt. It was an embarrassing business. All trace of stable government had perished: the dynasty was extinct and Tefnakhte, who had overthrown it, sat in Sais humbly awaiting the viceroy's commands. To add to Shabako's perplexities, a rumour was abroad that Assyria contemplated invasion of Egypt. The report perhaps did not impress the prince greatly. His acquaintance with the world outside the valley of the Nile must have been very limited, and of Assyria

¹ The ancient province of Kush was known to the Greeks as Ethiopia and the Romans as Nubia. Thus it is an anachronism at this period to speak of Kush as Ethiopia: but since the Twenty-fifth Dynasty goes by the name of Ethiopian, it may avoid confusion if the province of Kush does so also.

he could have known little or nothing. Moreover, he was burning to distinguish himself in war, and despite his ignorance of all that pertained to Assyria, he welcomed the chance of emulating his father's triumph. But before he could open the campaign, he must entrust his viceregency to a substitute, and considering the point, he could think of no better choice than his father's late enemy, Tefnakhte, prince of Sais.

It was a risk. Tefnakhte's loyalty, despite the oath of allegiance he had taken to Pi'ankhi, was doubtful; but probably Shabako had no other alternative, since apart from his formidable personality, Tefnakhte controlled the import and export trade of Egypt. Sais had displaced Tanis as the commercial capital, and the Canopic arm, the more easterly branch of the Nile, as the channel of seaborne merchandise. To Sais came now the Nilotic and Ionian shippers, exchanging their cargoes of oil and wine for cereals and sheep, and in Sais they found a hospitable welcome. It was a profitable business for both parties. The trader, no doubt, paid handsomely for the right to buy and sell; but in return for the dues he obtained protection and probably something akin to a monopoly. In this wise there grew up a primitive settlement on the bank of the Nile facing Sais that developed under the patronage of the next dynasty into the prosperous municipality of Naucratis.

The rise of Assyria from obscurity to greatness is a dramatic page of ancient history, and its decline a notable instance of the instability of empire. In the beginning, Assyrian ambition was limited to a modest occupation of the valley of the Tigris, and the early kings had enough to do with maintaining their footing there. But as their hold over Mesopotamia became permanent, ambition widened, and Assyria cast a covetous eye upon territory west of the Euphrates. Shalmaneser III was the first sovereign to cross that river, and his incursion into the valley of the Orontes frightened Damascus, Israel and Judah into an alliance. To strengthen the coalition, the three kings had invited Osorkon II of the Twenty-second Dynasty to join them. Osorkon may well have hesitated over his answer. On the one hand, the quarrel was no concern of his, nor was Assyria likely to pardon his participation in it; on the other, unless Shalmaneser was checked in Syria, Egypt might become his next victim. In the end, Osorkon gave the confederation his blessing, and dispatched a corps of

archers to swell its army. At Qarqara in 854 B.C. a battle was joined. Its result was doubtful: Shalmaneser withdrew to the Tigris, his opponents to their respective kingdoms. It was the first of Egypt's adventures into the tangled politics of Assyria and Canaan: a participation that led two centuries later to unsuspected disaster.

Involved in interminable warfare elsewhere, Shalmaneser's immediate successors did not repeat the experiment, but of the respite Damascus, Israel and Judah took no advantage. Consumed with jealous hatred, one was always at war with another, and the history of the three kingdoms is an unedifying story of intrigue and duplicity, of reprisal and counter-reprisal. From the confusion Tiglath-pileser, the Pul of the Old Testament, profited. Once free of domestic entanglements, he turned his attention upon Israel. Menahem, then its king, purchased immunity at the cost of 1,000 talents of silver: more rashly, his successor Pekah would not continue the tribute, and Israel paid heavily for the default. Tiglath-pileser ravaged the territory of Naphtali, Gilead and Galilee, and carried away their inhabitants captive to Assyria. Nor was that the only punishment that descended upon Pekah. Thinking to compensate himself for his lost territory, he planned an attack upon Judah. The moment was favourable: a stripling had just inherited the crown, and Rezin of Damascus was very ready to support the kingdom of Israel. The youthful Ahaz appealed to Tiglath-pileser for protection, crying: 'Save me out of the hand of the king of Syria and the king of Israel'. He sweetened his appeal by a present of the 'silver and gold that was in the house of the Lord', and always accessible to a bribe, the King of Assyria fell upon Damascus.¹ Pekah did not survive defeat. Half his court was pro-Assyrian, and Hoshea, the nineteenth and last King of Israel, supported by Tiglath-pileser, seized the throne. But Hoshea had no intention of remaining a vassal of Assyria, and on the accession of Shalmaneser IV he too ceased payment of tribute. In prison he had leisure to meditate over his temerity, but since nothing could stop shifty Hoshea's passion for intrigue, he was presently discovered to be conducting a treasonable correspondence with Egypt. It was too much for Shalmaneser's patience, and he determined to make an end of

¹ 2 Kings xv. 29 and 2 Chron. xxviii. 20 present different accounts of Tiglath-pileser's reaction to the message.

Israel. Of that kingdom, which once had extended from Bethel to Dan and from the sea to the Jordan, there was nothing left now but Samaria and a few outlying villages. Samaria withstood a siege of three years then, decimated by famine and pestilence, it capitulated unconditionally. A fearful retribution overtook the citizens. Sargon II, the conqueror, was merciless. 'He carried Israel away into Assyria and placed them in the cities of the Medes,'¹ replacing them by colonists from elsewhere. And so terminated the existence of Israel as a kingdom.

The jealousy that divided Israel and Judah preventing the formation of a common front to a common enemy was no doubt partly responsible for the humiliation that had befallen the first: but uncertainty whether safety lay in soliciting the help of Egypt or in purchasing the neutrality of Assyria, a second and more probable cause. Neither kingdom could ever permanently resolve that doubt, and both paid a heavy price for vacillation. It was not the fault of the seers of the period. In vain the prophet Hosea condemned the evils that follow indecision, in vain he adjured Israel to trust to neither power. 'They call unto Egypt,' he exclaimed, 'they go to Assyria. They make a covenant with Assyria, and oil is carried into Egypt.'² From perpetual vacillation could come only captivity and death in a strange land, but Hosea's exhortation fell upon deaf ears. In Judah a later and greater prophet, Isaiah, spoke with more courage. The downfall of Israel and the retribution that accompanied it did not frighten him. 'Thus saith the Lord, the Lord of Hosts,' he admonished the people of Jerusalem, 'be not afraid of the Assyrian: though he smite thee with the rod and lift up his staff against thee after the manner of Egypt.'³

Samaria fell in 722 B.C., and leaving the task of colonizing his conquest to subordinates, Sargon returned to Nineveh. Hardly was he back than news came of an Egyptian army⁴ lying entrenched in Gaza. He did not trouble to recross the Euphrates. Nineveh probably had no illusions concerning Egyptian intrigue in Western Asia, and Sargon probably intended at his convenience to punish its authors. But the moment was unpropitious. Babylon

¹ 2 Kings xvii. 6.

² Hosea vii. 11 and xii. 1.

³ Isa. x. 24.

⁴ Sargon's annals speak of the invader as Sibi and of his army as Muzri, and historians have fiercely disputed whether or not Sibi and Muzri are the equivalents of Shabaka and Egypt. The controversy has died and the identification is usually accepted. For details of the dispute see Knight's *The Nile and the Jordan*, p. 297.

was causing anxiety, the wild Haldians and Medes needed a lesson, and Sargon instructed his commander-in-chief in Canaan to dislodge the intruder. There could be no doubt how the campaign would end. Against an enemy that generations of war had made the most formidable military machine of the period, Shabako's nondescript force composed of Tefnakhte's disbanded soldiers of Arabs and Libyans stiffened perhaps by a modest contingent of Ethiopians, had little chance of victory. Extricating himself from Gaza, Shabako made a stand at Raphia (720 B.C.). It was of no avail: the army broke and fled, and the leader was lucky to escape with his life. Of the victory the Assyrian took no advantage. Without orders he dared not commit his force further, and thus Egypt was spared for a time the ignominy of occupation.

If Sargon let slip the opportunity, Tefnakhte was less negligent. Once certain of Shabako's disappearance, he assumed the title of King of Upper and Lower Egypt. It was an exaggerated claim since neither Thebes nor Heracleopolis acknowledged his sovereignty. Of Bocchoris, Tefnakhte's son and successor, little is known beyond a vague reference in an Assyrian inscription notifying receipt of tribute from Egypt, and a tablet in the Serapeum describing him as the son of Rē'. But if Egyptian records are lacking, Greek legend has made amends for the neglect. Plutarch praises Bocchoris' wisdom, and Diodorus his legal reforms. If, indeed, that Greek is to be credited, Bocchoris takes rank as one of the great law-givers of the ancient world, since he legalized mortgage of real estate, abolished imprisonment for debt and admitted the right of a debtor to swear a statement of fact where no written engagement existed. Against this testimony must be set the fact that the sober Herodotus does not include Bocchoris among the notable Kings of Egypt, and therefore posterity must reconcile the omission with legend as best it can.

Meanwhile, Shabako in Nubia was brooding over his injuries. His heart was bitter against Bocchoris, and he promised himself a bloody revenge for the trick Tefnakhte had played on him. Pi'ankhi's death in 715 B.C. provided an opportunity. The succession seems to have been divided: an elder brother, another Pi'ankhi, taking Ethiopia and Upper Egypt as his share of the inheritance and Shabako Lower Egypt as his portion. It was a

suitable arrangement, since experiment had shown that from Napata the administration of a territory that stretched from the sea to the fourth cataract was impossible. Thus three years later Shabako had dislodged Bocchoris from Memphis, and proclaimed himself King of Lower Egypt. The campaign had been a bloodless one. No finger had been lifted to save Bocchoris' person, no voice raised to uphold the right of the Tefnakhte Dynasty to the throne. Whatever the prestige of the house of Sais may have been, Bocchoris had obviously lost it. Beside his grudge against Tefnakhte, Shabako had a score also to settle with Assyria. He could neither forget nor forgive his inglorious defeat before Raphia, and he longed above all things to obliterate the memory by a triumphal reprisal. But Raphia had sobered Shabako and he appreciated better now the valour of the Assyrian soldier: he determined on a temporary policy of conciliation. Without an adequate army and substantial allies, Egypt could not hope to be victorious, and Shabako set about creating the first and persuading the principalities of Western Asia to promise their help. It was readily given. Sargon was reported to be occupied in raising and building temples and palaces, his armies in repelling the incursion of hordes of barbarians, and encouraged by the news, Shabako garrisoned Ascalon and other cities over which Egypt still pretended a vague suzerainty. Nor was the difficulty of raising an army any greater. Given time and money that achievement had always been easy in Egypt, and if Shabako had little money to spare, he could at least have his pick of the peasantry. For when trade was bad and famine prevalent, the wretched cultivator, forced to choose between the army and starvation, preferred the first. Moreover, on this occasion Shabako had under his hand a corps of Ethiopians who had followed him to Memphis: troops that he believed were superior in courage to any that Assyria could put into the field. Thus came into being an Egyptian army as good as the meagre resources of Egypt permitted, and there remained only the subject of command to be settled. If tradition were followed, Shabako himself must lead the army: but absence at Raphia had cost him the loss of the kingdom, and he was not prepared to incur the risk on this occasion. That consideration decided him to entrust the command to Taharqa, a younger brother, who had accompanied him to Memphis.

Indications also exist which suggest that Shabako honourably endeavoured to fulfil the more prosaic duties of a king. It was in his own interests to attend to them, for the maintenance of a standing army was an intolerable drain upon the resources of the throne. Revenue was hard to come by owing to the impoverishment of the cultivator and the impotence of the administration. Agriculture was in a bad way: breaches of the river banks were unrepaired, canals and drains uncleared of silt and wide areas of soil lying fallow for lack of supervision. Simultaneously, bands of hungry men roamed the Delta, plundering the unfortunate peasant and blackmailing a wealthier neighbour, till no man's life or property was safe. To restore prosperity and security after a century of misgovernment was beyond Shabako's power, but he seems at least to have struggled valiantly to repair the worst abuses of administration.

Of the coalition of powers that Shabako had been at such pains to negotiate in Western Asia, only Judah's loyalty was doubtful. The fate of Samaria had silenced the pro-Assyrian party in Jerusalem, and only the prophet Isaiah dared bid Hezekiah the king to rid himself of illusion concerning the majesty of Egypt. 'The strength of Pharaoh be your shame and the trust of Egypt your confusion,' he cried at one moment. 'Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help,' at another.¹ Hezekiah was still hesitating when Sargon died (705 B.C.), and tributary cities west of the Euphrates declared their independence. But if they counted upon immunity, their expectation was unjustified. Sennacherib, Sargon's successor, was no king to overlook rebellion, and he marched at once to reduce these vassals to submission.

The story of Sennacherib's campaign is difficult to unravel since the Assyrian annals frequently conflict with the narrative of the Old Testament concerning the sequence of events:² thus any reconstruction of it, apart from the initial stages, must be largely hypothetical. All seems to have gone well with Sennacherib in the beginning. The princes of Sidon, Arvad, Acre, Ascalon and Joppa, the kings of Moab, Amon and Edom offered no opposition, and the Assyrian army marched on Lachish in Southern Canaan. Its swift advance frightened Hezekiah into despatching

¹ Isa. xxx.

² Rawlinson's inscriptions in the British Museum; see *Records of the Past* (2nd Edition), vol. VI, for translation, and the Old Testament 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles.

a despairing message to Sennacherib. 'I have offended,' he wrote. 'Return from me: that which thou puttest on me, I will bear.' Sennacherib answered by requiring 300 talents of silver and thirty of gold as the price of his forbearance, and to pay that sum Hezekiah had to strip the temple and his palace of their treasure. It was not enough. At Lackish a doubt as to the safety of his left flank assailed Sennacherib, and his vizier the Rab Shakeh hurried to Jerusalem to persuade its people to preserve neutrality. But the gate of the city was closed, and the Rab Shakeh was forced to deliver his message to Eliakim, Hezekiah's chamberlain, who met him on the highway. The Rab Shakeh saw through the design, and to defeat it addressed Eliakim in the Hebrew tongue, intending that the citizens of Jerusalem lining the walls should also hear the communication. 'Thus saith the great king of Assyria,' he cried, 'on whom dost thou trust that thou rebellest against me: upon the staff of the bruised reed, even upon Egypt, on which if a man lean, it shall pierce his hand? So is Pharaoh king of Egypt unto all that trust on him.'¹ In vain Eliakim nervously besought the Assyrian to speak Syriac: for answer the Rab Shakeh asked contemptuously, 'Hath my Master sent me to thy master and to thee to speak?' and lifting up his voice, he repeated again Sennacherib's message. 'Hearken not to Hezekiah,' he exclaimed at the top of his voice, 'for thus saith the king of Assyria. Make agreement with me, and then eat every man of his vine and fig tree, until I take you away to a land of oil, olive and honey.'² A deep silence followed: Hezekiah had commanded, 'Answer not the man,' and Jerusalem had obeyed the injunction.

Lackish fell, and Sennacherib pushed on to Libnah. There he learnt of the presence in front of Altau (Ekron) of a formidable army, whose commander was reported to be relying upon Judah to sever Assyrian communications. Back to Jerusalem therefore went the Rab Shakeh to persuade Hezekiah to support Assyria. This time he spoke within the city to the king himself. 'Behold,' he said, 'thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by destroying them utterly,' and but for the encouragement of Isaiah, Hezekiah might have hesitated. 'Thus saith the Lord God: That which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib, I have heard. He shall not come into this city, nor

¹ 2 Kings xviii.² 2 Kings xviii.

shoot an arrow there. I will defend this city to save it for my own sake and for my servant's sake.'

Sennacherib made no further overture: postponing punishment of Hezekiah, he joined battle with the enemy at Altaqu. It was a hard-fought day of attack and counter-attack, whence neither side could claim a final advantage. A drawn battle is never a triumph, but such credit as is attributed to Altaqu rests with Shabako, who had created out of unpromising material an army that forced his more redoubtable foe to halt. Misled by Sennacherib's boast, 'the kings of Egypt called forth the archers, chariots and horses of Melutkhi [N.W. Arabia] and arranged their battle array before the city of Altaqu, and I fought against them and defeated them,'¹ some historians of the period speak of Altaqu as an Assyrian victory. A more accurate verdict may well be that it was a drawn battle, since Sennacherib did not pursue, and Shabako's nephew Taharqa, who was in command of the Egyptian army, returned to Egypt unmolested.

Shabako's reign (c. 715-703 B.C.) closed with the battle of Altaqu, and the moment of his disappearance from history is unknown; he deserves, none the less, an honourable place among the Kings of Egypt, for he checked Sennacherib and endeavoured to relieve his subjects of misgovernment. The monuments of the reign are scanty: no more than the decoration of a pylon in Karnak, an inscription in Luxor temple and a copy on stone of a very ancient and badly decayed papyrus which contained the text of a Memphite religious drama concerning Ptah.² The records of Shabako's son and successor, Shabataka (Shebitku) (c. 703-691), are even more meagre, though an inscription in Karnak commemorating an abnormally high Nile in the third year of his reign suggests that he was crowned in Thebes. If that was so, he may have maintained his court there, and committed the government of Lower Egypt to Taharqa. That conjecture receives support from a stela that records a journey undertaken by the queen-mother from Napata to Tanis to visit Taharqa, following his coronation. For twenty years mother and son had not met, and Tanis was so moved by the knowledge that it spoke of the queen-mother as Isis and the son as Horus.

¹ Rawlinson's *Cuneiform Inscriptions*, I, 37-42, tr. in *Records of the Past* (2nd Edition), vol. VI, pp. 83-101.

² British Museum stela No. 498; see Sethe, *Dramatische Texte*, 1 ff.

Whether Taharqa dislodged Shabataka from the throne, or whether he succeeded peacefully, is unknown: but in 688 B.C. he was speaking of himself as King of Upper and Lower Egypt, and governing the united kingdom from Tanis. The secular rule of Upper Egypt he had confided to Mentemhē, fourth Prophet of Amūn, Prince of Thebes. The spiritual power was vested in his sister Shepnupet II, divine votress. Tanis was an obvious choice for the capital, since it commanded the Way of the Philistines, the traditional approach of an enemy from Asia, and Taharqa could have been under no illusions after Altaqu concerning Sennacherib's intention to invade Egypt. To fortify himself against attack he persuaded Hezekiah to enter into a defensive alliance, and that king gladly agreed to do so. His situation was precarious. Revolt in Babylon had delayed the punishment that the vindictive Sennacherib had threatened to inflict upon Jerusalem, but that good fortune could not continue indefinitely, and Hezekiah, if 'he was not caged like a bird in the midst of his royal city' as Sennacherib vaingloriously declared, recognized like Taharqa the need of substantial support. Presently both kingdoms were fighting for their existence: one Assyrian army was advancing on Egypt, a second upon Jerusalem. It was an ill-starred adventure, of which legend has preserved only the end.¹ Of the two armies, Herodotus relates the disaster that overtook the first, and the Old Testament the fate of the second.²

Relieved from his military anxieties, Taharqa turned to the task of honouring the gods of Ethiopia and Egypt. Those of Napata were his first care. Overhanging the capital was Gebel Barkal, a lofty rock that passed by the name of the Sacred Mountain. At one corner stood the great temple of Amen-Rē' that Pi'ankhi had restored, yet still lacking a dignified niche to hold the divine bark of the god. That omission Taharqa now repaired, and simultaneously began the construction of a shrine dedicated to Amen-Rē' and his divine consort Mut: a masterpiece of temple architecture hewn in part out of the solid rock. Thebes also claimed his attention. In Karnak, partly perhaps out of respect, he designed an inspiring colonnade or processional approach to the Hypostyle hall, added to the existing temple of Ptah a porch and finally on the borders of the Sacred Lake raised

¹ Herodotus II, 141; Josephus, *Antiquities* X, 3.

² 2 Chron. xxxii. 21.

a shrine to commemorate his accession. These labours, evidence of his affection for the gods, were laudable enough: less to be commended are inscriptions recording battles he had never fought, cities he had never conquered, territory he had never penetrated.

Deceived by Manetho's classification of the dynasty as Ethiopian, occasional historians still speak of Pi'ankhi and his descendants as negroes. There is little to support the presumption, and Reisner, the leading authority of the period, incessantly challenges it. Nor perhaps did Manetho intend to imply by the use of the word more than the fact that the Twenty-fifth Dynasty came from territory south of the first cataract. He was compiling his history for the benefit of Greek readers, and to them Ethiopia signified only the Egyptian province of Kush. The fanciful student perhaps may find in a portrait statue or statuette of some one king traces of negro characteristics, but the indications are faint, and the most that can be said of the dynasty is that they were a dark-skinned race, akin to the blacks of the Northern Sudan of to-day. Be this as it may, it may at least be said of Taharqa that he was a masterful personality, who held together his extensive kingdom for a dozen years.

Assyria's capacity to produce an almost uninterrupted series of virile sovereigns has no parallel in history. To the Tiglath-pileasers, Shalmanesers, Sargons and Sennacheribs who flourished between the eleventh and seventh centuries before Christ, Egypt could only oppose a sequence of dynasties, rarely distinguished by any notable personage. To these Assyrian super-kings, masters of the arts of peace as well as of war, there succeeded in 680 B.C. Esarhaddon. The punishment of Sennacherib's assassins and the pacification of Babylon occupied the early years of his reign, but in 675 B.C. he was free to consider the conquest of Egypt. It was a doubtful adventure. Sargon and Sennacherib had acquired neither credit nor spoil in a similar undertaking, nor had either considered the price of victory. Egypt was too distant from Nineveh to govern as a dependency, too weak to be a peril to Assyria and the most conquest would bring was payment of tribute and cessation of interference in Western Asia. Meanwhile, a whisper of Esarhaddon's intentions had come to Taharqa's ears, and he prepared to defend himself. Encouraged by promises of support from Manasseh of Judah and the Princes of Tyre and

Sidon, he pushed his outposts as far as Ascalon, and awaited Esarhaddon's counter-stroke. It was not long in coming. Trapped in Jerusalem, Manasseh was sent in chains to Babylon, Tyre and Sidon were forced to recant their promises to Egypt and the Arabs of the desert compelled to provide transport for the expedition.

The campaign opened inconspicuously for the Assyrian arms. The Egyptian garrison of Ascalon held up the advance, and the Assyrian commander halted to await the coming of the king. But a presentiment of evil had fastened on Esarhaddon, and he would not leave Nineveh till Ashur and Ishtar, the national deities, assured him of a safe return. Thus he did not cross the Euphrates till the spring of 671 B.C. His attack took Egypt by surprise. In place of hugging the seaboard and crossing Sinai by the Way of the Philistines, he advanced through the land of the Amorites, took the Way of Shur and entered Egypt near Suez. There he struck the Wādi eṭ-Ṭumilāt, and was well on the way to Memphis before Taharqa in Tanis discovered he had been tricked. It was too late to repair the error, but Taharqa contrived to intercept the enemy near the modern Tell el-Kebir, and compelled him to give battle. Exhausted by their forced march across the Delta, and outmanoeuvred by better tactics, the Egyptian troops were no match for the Assyrian. Twice the gallant Taharqa rallied his men, twice weight of numbers forced him to retire, until, seeing the day was lost, he fled up the river, leaving his shattered army to seek refuge in Memphis. It was a poor protection: a past master in the art of storming walled cities, the Assyrian soldier made light of the Memphis defences, and with the submission of the city resistance in Lower Egypt ceased. Esarhaddon's exploitation of his conquest was less vindictive than might be supposed. The Ethiopian dynasty was abolished, Egypt was saddled with a heavy tribute: but local administration was left in the hands of a score of native nobles with Necho, Prince of Sais, at their head. One disappointment alone marred Esarhaddon's satisfaction: he could not exhibit in Nineveh Taharqa in chains as evidence of his triumph. The victim was beyond his reach. A flying column had been sent up the Nile to seize his person, but the king had had too long a start, and at Heracleopolis Esarhaddon broke off pursuit.

Laden with plunder, he went back to Nineveh, leaving mournful memories behind him. Tribute and occupation the Egyptian could resignedly support; but the substitution of the Assyrian divinities Ashur and Ishtar in place of Ptah and Amen-Rē, of the Assyrian as the official language, the renaming in the Assyrian tongue of Busiris, Athribis and other sacred cities and Esarhaddon's assumption of the title of 'King of Kings of Egypt, Pathoris [Upper Egypt] and Kusi [Kush or Ethiopia],' profoundly mortified their pride. No more politic was the division of the Delta into petty principalities: a type of government wholly unsuited to a country whose supreme need was a stable and centralized authority, and Esarhaddon would have been wiser to govern through a native king with pretensions to Ramesside blood in his veins. In such conditions reaction was inevitable, and Esarhaddon had hardly time to inscribe on the cliffs of the Dog River a record of his campaign or carve on the gateway of the Syrian Samal a representation of himself leading the King of Egypt by the nose, before revolt recalled him to Egypt.

In reorganizing Egyptian administration he had left out of account Taharqa, and no sooner had Esarhaddon turned his back on the Nile than the irrepressible Ethiopian was planning recovery of his kingdom. It was a hazardous but not impossible operation. Ethiopia and Upper Egypt were solidly behind him. Lower Egypt was consumed with a fierce hatred of the occupation. The tributary princes, nominees of Esarhaddon, anticipating administrative autonomy, resented the presence of Assyrian officers, counsellors in name, despots in reality, at their elbow. The peasantry abhorred the rapacious and brutal Assyrian soldiers quartered in their neighbourhood. Nor from a military point of view was the adventure unpromising. Esarhaddon could not afford to hold up a large army in Egypt, and the garrison he left at strategic centres were too scattered to crush a general rising. Thus Taharqa's reconquest of Lower Egypt was a simple achievement. Memphis fell, the Assyrian viceroy fled and princes and people hastened to congratulate the conqueror. But if Esarhaddon had omitted Taharqa from his calculation, the latter was no wiser. If any prediction of an Assyrian king's reaction to revolt could be made with certainty, it was that the throne neither pardoned nor forgot it, and reassured by Ashur and Ishtar of his personal safety, Esarhaddon set out to punish Egypt. But his gods on this

occasion did not redeem their promise. The king died on the march (669 B.C.), and the crown passed to Ashurbanipal, the great and noble Osnappar, last of the illustrious sovereigns of Assyria.

In his twenty-fourth regnal year Taharqa was in Memphis engaged in celebrating the burial of a sacred bull when news of the enemy's approach reached him. He summoned the Princes of Sais, Pelusium, Athribis, Tanis, Sebennytus, Mendes, Busiris and other cities to Memphis, he ordered a levy *en masse* of the peasantry. The command fell on deaf ears: terrified at the thought of Assyrian vengeance, the noble withdrew to the desert, the cultivator stayed in his fields. Thus a single battle fought at Karbani (Canopus?), in the north-east Delta, was sufficient to decide the issue. 'On the wide battlefield I accomplished the overthrow of the enemy,' says Ashurbanipal in his annals. 'Memphis he [Taharqa] abandoned and to save his life he fled into Thebes. That city I took, my army I caused to enter and rest in the midst of it.'¹ Taharqa was not there: once again he had slipped away to Napata, leaving Mentemhē the task of making the best terms he could with the enemy. Since Ashurbanipal's annals do not speak of the sack of Thebes, possibly the astute Mentemhē contrived to buy off the Assyrian. The latter was no respecter of Egyptian divinities and temples, and it was worth while paying handsomely to secure immunity for Amen-Rē'. Mentemhē was no doubt a pious soul, as his later labours in purifying various shrines and chapels polluted by the presence of the Assyrian soldier bear witness.²

Taharqa tempted fortune no more. Old age was creeping on him and he spent the remaining years of his life in educating his nephew and heir, Tanutamūn (Tanwetamani). The theme of the lesson never varied: upon the crown prince the uncle laid the task of expelling the Assyrian from Lower Egypt. Taharqa died in 665 B.C., and his successor, Tanutamūn, thereupon beheld in his sleep a vision of two serpents standing one on each side of him. He awoke with a start, and summoned the interpreters of dreams to explain their presence. It was a simple task. The soothsayers replied: 'Thine is the South-land; take thou possession also of the North-land. The two serpent-goddesses [of Upper

¹ Cylinder in the British Museum.

² Inscription in the temple of Mut in Karnak.

and Lower Egypt] are manifest on thy brow, and there is given to thee the land in its length and breadth.¹

Tanutamūn, thus accepted as king, in due course sailed north to execute the commission Taharqa had bequeathed him. Once again conditions seemed to favour the recovery of Lower Egypt. Impending trouble in Mesopotamia had sent Ashurbanipal scampering home, and taking the retirement as a sign of weakness, a handful of leading Egyptians besought Taharqa to return to Memphis. But Taharqa was dying, or perhaps even dead, when the appeal reached Napata, and it was Tanutamūn who answered it. On his way down the Nile he stopped first at Aswān to honour Klnum, god of the cataract, next at Thebes to ask a blessing of Amen-Rē' and then without warning appeared before Memphis. Meanwhile, the correspondence between Lower Egypt and Ethiopia had been discovered, the ringleaders arrested and sent in chains to Nineveh for judgement. Of them only Necho, Prince of Sais and of Memphis, returned to tell the tale, and the fate of his companions caused partisans of Tanutamūn to reflect before committing themselves irrevocably. Set at liberty and honoured by marks of the royal favour, Necho showed his gratitude to the King of Assyria by defending Memphis against Tanutamūn's assault. He failed to do so, and in the fighting lost his life. None the less, the victor's welcome was lukewarm. Of twenty vassal princes, only a few acknowledged Tanutamūn's sovereignty: the majority retired into the inaccessible marshlands of the Delta, where they remained till hunger moved them to ask for terms. 'Come they to fight, or to submit?' asked Tanutamūn of the messenger, and when the latter answered 'to submit', he pardoned and entertained the offenders.

It was a small triumph, yet apparently sufficient to persuade Tanutamūn that he might safely return to Napata: a typical witness of the short-sighted vision that usually distinguished this dynasty. Seldom did it suspect a counter-stroke, rarely prepare to meet it. Thus while Tanutamūn was adding at Gebel Barkel another unwanted temple in honour of Amen-Rē', Ashurbanipal was hurrying through Syria on his way to Egypt. His advance was so rapid that before news of his approach was received in Ethiopia, Tanis, Mendes, Busiris and other cities were tasting the measure of Assyrian vengeance. In the hope of saving Memphis,

¹ Stela from the temple of Amen-Rē' in Gebel Barkal, now in the Cairo Museum.

Tanutamūn hastened down the river. He was too late. At Heracleopolis he learnt that the capital had fallen, that Lower Egypt was making its peace with the aggressor and hurriedly he retraced his steps.

Thebes suffered for the sins of the pusillanimous king. Ashurbanipal mercilessly stripped the temples of their treasure, massacred the inhabitants without regard to either age or sex and, to consummate Thebes' humiliation, carried off as an offering to the Assyrian gods Ashur and Ishtar 'two lofty obelisks adorned with beautiful carvings'. Little wonder if the prophet Nahum, predicting later the destruction of Nineveh, could think of no better analogy than the ruins of Thebes. 'Nineveh is laid waste: who will bemoan her?' he cried, and asked: 'Art thou better than the populous No Amon that was situated among the rivers, that has the waters round about her, whose rampart was the Sea? Ethiopia and Egypt were her helpers. Yet was she carried away into captivity, her young children were dashed to pieces at the head of all the streets, and all her great men were bound in chains.'¹

The downfall of Thebes (663 B.C.) marked the end of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty and the close of Ethiopia's long and intimate association with Egypt. It was a profitable termination for both kingdoms. Out of the ashes of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty arose a successor that restored the glories of Egypt; out of the separation there emerged a new Ethiopia and a new civilization. The capital was eventually moved from Napata to Meroë: imperial ambition once centred upon Egypt was directed towards the valley of the Blue Nile. Yet something to Ethiopia was lost in the process. The Egyptian tongue gradually vanished from use, and with its disappearance departed also Ethiopia's connection with Egyptian culture.

¹ Nahum iii. 7.

CHAPTER VI

THE TWENTY-SIXTH OR SAITE DYNASTY

Psammetichus (Psamtek) I	663-609 B.C.
Necho	609-594 B.C.
Psammetichus II	594-588 B.C.
Apries (Hophra)	588-568 B.C.
Amasis	568-525 B.C.
Psammetichus III	-525 B.C.

THE history of the five preceding dynasties is one of progressive decline. From time to time a commanding personality illuminates the gloomy chapters: but the instances are rare, and the story is confined to the enumeration of kings, impotent in war and in peace. From their ineffective rule, Upper had broken away from Lower Egypt, imperial pretensions in Asia had been abandoned, commercial supremacy lost. Decadence was apparent in all aspects of life, decay had been continuous and the nadir was now reached. Art also had been a victim of national impoverishment. Temple architecture was unimpressive, a lavish use of gold in decoration only heightened its heaviness. Portrait sculpture was expressionless, reliefs no less so: the composition of inscriptions was uninspiring, the art of cutting hieroglyphics had declined.

The regeneration of Egypt was the achievement of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty, and in particular of its founder, Psammetichus, son of Necho, who owed his life to the magnanimity of Ashurbanipal. Flight into Asia had saved the son from sharing his father's fate in Memphis, and he returned to Egypt in the train of the Assyrian king. Impressed by the young prince's address, Ashurbanipal commended him to the favourable notice of the commander of the army of occupation, and the latter was soon glad enough to avail himself of Psammetichus' counsel. Brigandage was spreading, tribute falling into arrear; the local administration, a legacy of Esarhaddon, could neither suppress the first nor collect the second.

Conceding reluctantly that Egypt could be administered only by an Egyptian, the occupation invited Psammetichus to take charge. It was an ingenious solution, that relieved the Assyrian

commander of his own difficulties, and provided the peasantry with a governor who spoke their tongue and appreciated their prejudices. Only his fellow princes resented the change, and prepared to resist it by force. Their opposition Psammetichus had foreseen and taken measures to defeat by enlisting Greek mercenaries. News of a new employer spread into Asia Minor, and Ionian and Carian men-at-arms hurried to Sais to offer their services. Thus Psammetichus presently had under his hand a contingent of troops more experienced and more heavily armed than any levy his antagonists could muster. Overawed by the knowledge the latter sulkily submitted, and Psammetichus meditated over the future of Egypt. Two courses lay open: one that had as its goal reconstitution of the kingdom as a tributary state of Assyria, the other only a modest relief from the rigours of a military occupation.

To Psammetichus the first was the only possible alternative, and he set to work to persuade the Assyrian of its advantages. It was a delicate business, since it implied his own elevation to the throne: but he overcame that objection by declaring that as a vassal king he would not only fulfil existing obligation, but also others that Assyria might impose upon Egypt in the future. Embarrassment concerning the Thebaid helped him to gain his end. Conditions there reflected little credit upon Assyrian administration of conquered territory. Thebes had been sacked and its privileges transferred to Heracleopolis: but the Ethiopian princess Shepnupet continued to officiate as divine votress and her steward Mentemhē to control the revenues of Amen-Rē'. Nor was the occupation anxious to dispossess either by force. Its strength was barely sufficient to hold the Delta, and to garrison the Thebaid also was impracticable. If the reinstitution of the throne would alter the state of affairs, the experiment was worth making in Assyrian opinion, and taking the concession as consent, Psammetichus in c. 660 B.C. proclaimed himself King of Upper and Lower Egypt.

In counting his regnal years from the date of Necho's death, Psammetichus had hopes of convincing his enemies that he enjoyed an hereditary right to the throne. It was a claim they did not admit, nor do the Assyrian annals suggest that Ashurbanipal raised Necho to the dignity of king. On the contrary, they state that he 'restored him [Necho] to the place where the

father, my begetter in Sais, to the kingdom had appointed him', and lest the significance of the command was misunderstood, Ashurbanipal added, 'to his district I restored him'.¹

Civil war followed Psammetichus' proclamation: the western nomes supported his kingship, the eastern repudiated it. Of the conflict of opinion there could be but one end: superior in number, the western nomes were inferior in all else. Unity was lacking in counsel, combination in the field and the struggle unpopular with the cultivator. Thrice within a single generation the peasant had seen his fields wasted, his women violated, and to participate in a quarrel that concerned only his masters was more than he could tolerate. Thus Psammetichus' Greek mercenaries rarely found an enemy that stood its ground, or a city that sustained a siege, and one by one the hostile princes asked for terms. There were none to be had but unconditional surrender, and thus closed a chapter of dynastic history that had brought nothing but confusion and misery to Egypt.

Civil war leaves an aftermath, and five years passed before Psammetichus was free to attend to the Thebaid. It was a simpler problem than the Delta: with no intractable nobles to convince or overawe, conciliation was the obvious remedy. Control of the hierarchy was the key of the situation: if Psammetichus could inspire Amen-Rē's utterances, and administer the god's revenues without offending local susceptibility, the rest was easy. The office of high priest had been in abeyance since Osorkon of the Twenty-third Dynasty had transferred its prerogatives to the divine votress, his daughter, the first Shepnupet. It was a situation that had puzzled the Ethiopian Kashta on his occupation of Thebes. Reluctant to leave religious and political control in the hands of his enemy's daughter, yet unwilling to affront opinion by summarily dispossessing her, he found a solution that ended the perplexity. Shepnupet was permitted to remain divine votress, provided she adopted Amenardis, daughter of Kashta, as her successor. Taharqa continued the practice, and Psammetichus could think of no better alternative.

The Ethiopian occupation had never been popular, and the Thebaid rejoiced to be rid of the last trace of it when Psammetichus announced his intention to install Nitocris, his eldest daughter, as divine votress. So much Psammetichus must have counted

¹ Cylinder A, British Museum; *Records of the Past* (2nd edition), vol. I, p. 66.

upon, and to drive home the advantage, he declared himself to be 'son of Amen-Rē' begotten to satisfy his divine heart'. Doubt must have crossed his mind at this point whether Thebes would accept his simple word as evidence of divinity, since he hastened to add, 'I am a king who loves truth, my particular abomination is lying'.

A stela¹ in the temple of Karnak records Nitocris' departure from Sais, her voyage up the Nile, her welcome in Thebes, her induction as divine votress, her reception by the dispossessed Shepnupet. The story is more romantic than customarily fell to the lot of a court scribe to narrate, and it is to the credit of the writer of this inscription that he took advantage of it. The narrative has a flavour of romance, not often found in temple records.

Clad in white, wearing ornaments of malachite, the princess took her seat in the royal barge one morning in the ninth year of her father's reign, and set off to meet her heavenly spouse. Nothing was left undone to mark the significance of the occasion. Heralds went ahead to announce her progress, chamberlains to arrange accommodation ashore when the illustrious traveller desired to break the journey. A squadron of galleys, commanded by the great nobles, preceded the royal barge, a company of picked men-at-arms formed the bodyguard: in charge of the flotilla was the nomarch of Heracleopolis, commander-in-chief of the forces of the king. At Thebes, tumultuous crowds awaited the arrival of the princess, and as the barge approached the bank a loud shout went up, 'The daughter of the King of Upper Egypt comes to the house of Amen-Rē,' followed by a prayer from the priests that the god of Thebes would grant His Majesty 'a million years of life, a million years of stability, a million years of satisfaction'. Carried in a litter borne by temple acolytes, Nitocris passed into the temple and took the customary vows. In her palace, awaiting the end of the ceremony, sat the dethroned and deserted Shepnupet. Whether Psammetichus intended his daughter to supersede or only to understudy her is uncertain; on the one hand, he had declared that he was no king 'to expel an heir from his place', on the other, the priests and laity of Thebes seem to have settled the point in a contrary sense. Whatever the fact, Shepnupet neither challenged the decision nor protested

¹ Now in Cairo Museum.

against the supersession of her adopted daughter and niece, Amenardis II, but surrendering her revenues, retired into private life. It was handsomely done.

A survey of his labours at this stage should have left Psammetichus content. Without undue violence he had become undisputed master of Upper and Lower Egypt; without impairing his relations with Assyria he had nationalized administration; without exciting murmur he had raised a substantial force of mercenaries. They were achievements that impressed his neighbours, and Gyges of Lydia, thinking that Psammetichus must be contemplating rupture with Assyria, came forward with offers of friendship. The belief was unfounded: Psammetichus harboured no such design. His gratitude to Ashurbanipal had never wavered: his ambition soared no higher than the substitution of alliance for vassaldom. Lydia's relations with Assyria are obscure, and Ashurbanipal's assertion that Gyges was prince 'of a district across the sea, a remote place of which my fathers had not heard,'¹ was possibly true.

On the other hand, Assyrian troops must have assisted Lydia in repelling an incursion of the nomad Cummerians, or Gyges could not have dispatched envoys to Nineveh to acknowledge the help. Ashurbanipal received them coldly, and, taking offence, Gyges looked elsewhere for support. Egypt caught his eye, and Psammetichus was very willing to listen to the overtures. News of the correspondence angered Ashurbanipal: he thought Psammetichus had been guilty of duplicity, and reserved his punishment for a more propitious hour.

His attention, in fact, was then wholly centred upon consolidating his own kingdom. A long-standing dispute between Nineveh and Babylon had come to a head, and Ashurbanipal had no leisure to chastise tributary states. The trouble had originated in Esarhaddon's reluctance to settle the succession. The choice had lain between his sons Shamash-shum-ukin, the elder, and Ashurbanipal, the younger, and during the father's absence in Egypt the court had hotly debated their claims. To such a pitch had partisanship come, that Esarhaddon on his return could only compose it by creating both sons crown princes: assigning Nineveh as Ashurbanipal's sphere, and Babylon as that of Shamash-shum-ukin. The compromise settled nothing, and on

¹ *Records of the Past*, loc. cit., p. 70.

Esarhaddon's death, in 669 B.C., each son assumed the title of king. Shamash-shum-ukin in Babylon contended that one empire existed, ruled by two sovereigns: Ashurbanipal insisted that his brother enjoyed royalty only on sufferance. 'I established my brother,' he cried, 'on an equality as king': but interference in the domestic affairs of Babylon gave the lie to his words. In the fratricidal war that followed Shamash-shum-ukin, harassed by rebellious tribes in the south, could make no headway. Babylon fell in 648 B.C., and Shamash-shum-ukin perished by his own hand.

The triumph was dearly bought. The protracted campaign had obliged Ashurbanipal to withdraw his scattered garrison, and on the departure of the troops from Egypt, Psammetichus ceased to pay tribute. In view of earlier pledges concerning tribute, Psammetichus' attitude was not very honest. Yet he could plead at least this excuse. His undertaking to fulfil obligations imposed on Egypt by Assyria was conditional upon the permanence of the occupation: once it was ended, the undertaking also lapsed. Further to this was the fact that Egypt had patiently supported the burden of tribute for a generation of years, and her people may reasonably have thought the period long enough to redeem the sin of their rulers. But though cessation of tribute implied the end of vassaldom, Psammetichus' sympathies lay with Nineveh in its struggle to crush Babylon. To Ashurbanipal he owed an unforgettable debt: he had spared Necho the father, he had allowed the son to ascend the throne, and Psammetichus was no man to forget a personal obligation.

But the future was uncertain, and Assyria's reaction could not be predicted: Egypt might become the victim of fresh aggression, and the cautious Psammetichus reviewed his defences. The survey was none too comforting. The Libyan tribesmen, in payment of the crown, who once watched the Sinai frontier, had disappeared, and the duty had fallen upon the local nomes. Enough has already been said of the Delta princelets to indicate their unfitness for the charge, and the ease with which the Assyrian again and again had penetrated Egypt corroborates the judgement. Presumably a garrison was still maintained in Pelusium: but its strategic importance vanished when Esarhaddon crossed Sinai by the Way of Shur. Impressed by this fact, Psammetichus established a camp midway between the sea and Lake Timsah:

near enough to support Pelusium if the enemy came by the Way of the Philistines, yet able to harass him if he followed Esarhaddon's line of march. The new outpost, known to the Greeks as Daphnae, to the Hebrews as Taphenas and later to the Arabs as Deffneh, was a cantonment rather than a camp, dominated by a citadel, and garrisoned by Ionian and Carian mercenaries. Apart from defence, other reasons may have persuaded Psammetichus to quarter his mercenaries at Daphnae. The Greek soldier possibly was becoming an embarrassment: reliable in the field, he was less so in peace, and with this thought in mind Psammetichus disposed of more mercenaries at Marea, in the north-west of the Delta. It also was a frontier that called for incessant patrol and watch. The Libyan tribesman was still a potential raider, and Canopus a port that an enemy coming by sea would steer for.

There remained the defence of the south. It was a simple problem. Ethiopia was no longer an enemy, and the interest of Napata confined to the occasional dispatch of deputations to Amen-Rē' of Karnak, as an inscription in the temple of Mut recording the arrival of a convoy laden with gifts bears witness. None the less, Psammetichus stationed at Aswān a body of Egyptian-born troops, part of the national army it was his design to create: unwilling conscripts, sustained only by the belief that three years' service on the frontier was the limit of their calvary. They were mistaken. It was a concession that Psammetichus may have promised to the mercenary stationed in inhospitable Sinai, but had no intention of extending to the conscript comfortably encamped on Elephantine Island. Nor would he attend to the supplications of the Egyptian garrison, until taking the law into their hands, the troops left the island and marched south. In vain Psammetichus reminded the deserters of the duty they owed to their gods and their wives.¹ Stung by the injustice, they answered roughly that Ethiopia would provide for both, and continued the march.

Only once in Psammetichus' reign did his Sinai defences seem likely to be tested. The threat came from an unexpected quarter, delivered by a people of whose existence Egypt was probably unaware. They were the Scythians, tribesmen inhabiting the shores of the Black and the Caspian Seas and possessed by a

¹ *Herodotus* II, 30.

passion for migration. Upon Asia Minor, reputed to be rich and unwarlike, these nomads about 635 B.C. descended suddenly, and so began, according to Herodotus, 'a domination over Asia Minor that lasted eight and twenty years'. The length of their stay and the extent of their conquest were probably exaggerated: but no doubt the incursion frightened Western Asia. Jeremiah in gloomy words had predicted their coming. 'They are cruel and have no mercy,' he warned Judah; 'their voice roareth like the sea.' Zephaniah's belief was no more cheerful. 'Gaza,' he cried, 'shall be forsaken and Ascalon be a desolation.' Their lamentations were premature: Egypt and not Canaan was the Scythians' goal, and Psammetichus' resolution saved his country. In place of awaiting attack at Daphnae, he crossed Sinai and confronted the enemy on the borders of Canaan. Neither side, it seems, was anxious to give battle. Psammetichus could win neither reputation nor spoil by victory, and the Scythian commander, astonished by the bold bearing of the Egyptian army, thought more doubtfully of the adventure. Thus came about an agreement whereby both parties undertook to retire. It was a pact more honoured in the letter than in the spirit, since the Scythians maintained their hold on Ashdod, and Psammetichus on Ascalon and Gaza.

Psammetichus' military measures produced a sense of security to which Egypt responded unhesitatingly. Freed from anxiety, commerce recovered its spirit. The Greek trader, who had hitherto confined his enterprise to towns lying on the Canopic branch of the Nile, looked now upon the whole Delta as his sphere: moving from nome to nome as his operations dictated. In his wake followed Tyrian and Phoenician salesmen, competing for a share of the Egyptian market, and establishing settlements in turn in Memphis and other populous centres. Reviving prosperity breathed fresh life into art also, and portrait statuary in particular profited from it. In place of characterless representations of the face and figure, the Saite sculptor strove to present a faithful likeness of his client. Symbols and conventions hitherto favoured were discarded: the full wig and the false beard disappeared, the short kilt replaced the sleeved robe. It was a reversion to the art of early dynastic ages, but less a slavish imitation than an adaptation of it. Unhappily fresh conventions crept in, and the pronounced *simper* so marked in the Ptolemaic

period is a legacy of Saite times. The tendency to pursue ideals of the past is no less noticeable in mortuary chapels that have survived destruction. The tombs of the kings of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty have vanished; but the structure and decoration of chapels in the necropolis of Thebes, wherein once lay the bodies of Abe, Pedamenopĕ, Pbĕo and other nobles of the period, indicate also the archaizing influence of their day. The recessed panels that represent the 'false door' were copied from early tombs: the scenes of everyday life that distinguished the chapels of the Eighteenth Dynasty were replaced by representations of sacrifices, offerings and invocations reminiscent of the Pyramid age. Something, in short, was lost in the process.

In this enthusiasm for early ideals, art was only following the attitude of the community. Shaken by memories of invasion, occupation and civil war, the Egyptian had come to believe that relief from these evils lay in a return to the virtuous ideals of his forefathers, when kings were divine and men lived in amity and peace. That conviction led to a mysterious revival of piety: more superstitious perhaps than religious, yet sufficiently stable to persuade Herodotus that 'the Egyptian people are religious to an excess far beyond any other race of man'. Nor did sentiment stop at retrospect: a desire to know the sacred literature of earlier ages fastened upon the community. Ancient tombs were scrutinized to discover inscriptions, temple libraries ransacked to recover forgotten manuscripts and scribes acquainted with the hieroglyphic and hieratic scripts sought to transliterate them into demotic. That was a necessary preliminary, if the laity were to read and understand ancient texts. In the course of centuries, Egyptian speech and writing had undergone, in common with all living languages, radical change. Words commonly used in the Pyramid age had dropped out of use, knowledge of the hieroglyphic and hieratic forms of writing was confined to an elect few. And side by side with the demand for sacred literature there arose a desire to possess miniature replicas of the divinities who protected mankind: a demand that the Egyptian craftsman made haste to satisfy. No longer was it necessary to make a tedious pilgrimage to invoke protection of a particular deity; more fortunate than his forefathers, the pious Saite had become convinced that the deity could transmit his virtue to the replica. The same craze was responsible for an increased demand of

Ushabti figures, the servants of their master after death as in life. The Twelfth Dynasty had introduced the practice of providing the dead with substitutes or 'answerers' in the next world, and Saite craftsmen gave a new turn to their fashionings. He dropped the habit of the Eighteenth Dynasty of representing the Ushabti in the dress of the period, and returned to the use of the mummy-form type.

Out of the practice there developed a mysterious regard for the animal kingdom. The cult was ancient, a relic presumably of the totem representation of some beast or bird that distinguished the prehistoric clan. The earlier dynasties preserved the tradition by associating the clan totem with the nome divinity, whereby Khnum achieved the head of a ram, Horus that of a hawk and so on. But in the passage of time the significance of the combination was forgotten, the parasitical quality of the totem was lost to sight and totem and god became indistinguishable. The Saite epoch so developed the tendency that in practice almost all creatures indigenous to Egypt became sacred or semi-sacred beings. Admission to the animal pantheon was indiscriminate: from now onwards the crocodile, the serpent, the cat, the jackal, once only totems, became sacred or semi-sacred in the eyes of the religious Egyptian: enjoying the privileges of embalmment, of burial in special cemeteries and more vaguely of life after death. An exaggerated demand for replicas of animals as well as gods sprang up, and to it may be ascribed the profusion of images in metal, stone and faience of the cats, snakes and so on that crowd the shelves of collectors of Egyptian antiquities.

Since Psammetichus built no imposing temple or scattered largesse upon the hierarchies, it may be supposed that he did not wholly share his subjects' belief that Egypt's salvation depended upon the pursuit of religious ideals of the past: beyond repairing decayed pyramids and shrines, his interest seems to have been confined to adding a gallery to the Apeum or mausoleum of the sacred bulls of Memphis, and to restoring a chapel that crowned the burial vaults. The latter brought him renown at no cost to his private purse. Of all the sacred or semi-sacred animals the bull Apis was the best known and the most venerated. The burial of one and the initiation of its successor were occasions of universal mourning and rejoicing, and when in the fifty-second year of the reign news came to Sais that the Apeum was in

danger of collapsing, Psammetichus listened sympathetically. 'The temple of the father Osiris-Apis,' said the messenger, 'and the things therein are beginning to fall to ruin. The divine limbs are visible in his coffin and decay has laid hold of his funerary chests.' The shocked Psammetichus at once ordered the work of restoration to be put in hand. The chapel was rebuilt, the construction of a new gallery undertaken. It was all handsomely done: nor, indeed, was there need to consider the expense, since the work was carried out by forced labour under the orders of an officer of the royal court.

While Egypt was laying the foundations of permanent prosperity, Assyria was approaching catastrophe. Ashurbanipal's calculations had gone astray: in place of consolidating the empire, the capture of Babylon had produced grave complications. The loyalty of his allies in the south was doubtful; that of their leader, the Chaldaean Bel Ibni, even less certain. In vain had the king addressed the people of 'the Sea Lands' or Southern Babylonia as 'men under my protection', in vain had he chastised Elam, their unruly neighbour: neither words nor deeds accomplished the end he sought, and his death in 626 B.C. increased the empire's perplexities. It was an event that Nabopolassar, son of Bel Ibni and administrator of 'the Sea Lands', had eagerly awaited, and styling himself king, he proclaimed his independence. Nor did his ambition stop there: his mind was set upon the creation of a Chaldaean empire, of which he was master and Babylon the capital. Meanwhile, Assyria was contending with increasing adversity. East and west of the two rivers her prestige was declining, her dominion shrinking and, to crown these misfortunes, dispute raged in Nineveh concerning the succession. But Nabopolassar was also at a disadvantage: apart from his own people, he mistrusted the tribesmen of half of his kingdom, and was doubtful of the attitude of Judah and of Egypt. Thus it was not until 616 B.C. that he felt sufficient confidence to strike.

In the spring of that year he marched up the Euphrates, stormed Qablinu, and was about to move on when reports of an Egyptian army in the north caused him to halt uncertainly. The intervention was well timed, politically and strategically: Nabopolassar fell back on Babylon, Assyria acquired time to organize her defence and Egypt had demonstrated her interest in the campaign. Having carefully considered the chances of the two

parties, Psammetichus thought Assyria to be the more likely victor and decided to support her. It was a curious ending to his relations with that empire: in youth he had been its servant, in middle age its vassal, now in old age he had come forward as its defender. The sequel proved his forecast to be mistaken: but at this juncture he could have neither suspected the weakness of Assyria, nor anticipated the later intervention of the Medes. Possibly he did not intend his championship to go beyond a demonstration on the Euphrates or to be more than a hint that Egypt could not be ignored: for on the retirement of the Babylonian army the Egyptian withdrew also.

But Nabopolassar had not abandoned his design, and within six months he was again in the field. On this occasion he chose the Tigris as his line of march, the city of Ashur as his objective. Driving before him the enemy's outposts, he crossed the river and lay siege to Ashur. But on this occasion Nineveh was not asleep. It dispatched a strong column to the relief, and once again Nabopolassar was foiled. Thus far Assyria had had none of the struggle, and but for the intervention of the Medes at this stage, the vision of a Chaldaean empire must have perished. Hitherto unconsidered neighbours, the Medes under Cyaxares had developed into a formidable power, and Nineveh's apparent ignorance of the fact reflects little credit upon her intelligence. Cyaxares, on the other hand, was well acquainted with Assyria's weakness, and having tested it in a preliminary raid or two, he crossed the Tigris and threatened Nineveh. But his force was too small to carry its defences, and he turned on Ashur as an easier victim. A second siege within twelve months was more than its inhabitants could stand, and Cyaxares was in possession of the city before Nabopolassar was aware of the presence of the Medes. Concealing his disappointment, he hurried to Ashur to propose a joint attack upon Nineveh. The plan suited Cyaxares, still smarting from his failure to capture the Assyrian capital, very well, and a dynastic marriage between Amyitis, his daughter, and Nebuchadnezzar, son of Nabopolassar, sealed the compact. The following summer (612 B.C.) the combined armies invested Nineveh. The city was strongly defended, and three pitched battles were necessary before the enemy could breach the walls or deliver the final assault. It was the end of Nineveh, the great temples of Ishtar and Nabu were overthrown, their spacious

gardens desolated; the library that Ashurbanipal had been at such pains to create was demolished, its priceless contents were scattered to the winds. Thus had the vision of the prophet Nahum, 'Nineveh is laid waste: who will bemoan her?'¹ come to pass. A city renowned above all others of its time for piety, splendour and culture.

Of the campaign Psammetichus had remained a spectator, and his reasons were substantial enough. Not only had the Euphrates for many generations been the limit of an Egyptian offensive in Asia, but against a combination of Medes and Babylonians he might well think himself powerless, and finally he had reached a period of life when men are inclined to shun adventure. He died in the fifty-fourth year of his reign (609 B.C.), and Egypt rightly mourned the passing of a king who had replaced servitude by freedom, impoverishment by prosperity. His victories had been the victories of peace.

¹ Nahum iii. 7.

CHAPTER VII

THE TWENTY-SIXTH DYNASTY (*continued*)

SHARING none of his father's prejudices concerning the Euphrates, Necho, heir to the throne, thought it impolitic to watch idly the dismemberment of Assyria, and urged his father to intervene again in the struggle. But Psammetichus was immovable: having made his decision, he would not depart from it, and bade his son leave him in peace. It was a mortifying command to Necho, convinced that Nabopolassar would presently turn upon Egypt, and confident also that a spirited Egyptian offensive would check the design. If intervention was desirable, the hour no doubt had come to strike. Following the fall of Nineveh (612 B.C.), Cyaxares (the Mede) had marched home, leaving to his partner the task of subjugating Northern Assyria, and of Nabopolassar's military quality Necho had a poor opinion. Twice in the course of the campaign the Chaldaean king had suffered reverses, and Necho was persuaded that Nineveh would have made a third but for assistance of the Medes. Nor was this all. The Assyrian empire though moribund was not dead, and over the walls of Harran, the ancient capital of Mesopotamia, there still floated the imperial standard. Within the city, Ashuruballit, possibly a younger son of Ashurbanipal, had proclaimed himself king of a new Assyria, and from it was appealing to Egypt for help. So long as Psammetichus lived, no answer was likely to be forthcoming, and Necho could only encourage the Assyrians to await his own succession. There followed a pause in the fighting: Nabopolassar being busy in collecting tribute, Ashuruballit in raising levies. Thus Harran escaped attack until 610 B.C., when Nabopolassar, borrowing a contingent of Medes, invested the city. It offered no resistance: Ashuruballit withdrew into Syria, preferring to retain his mobility, and again appealed to Egypt. He was more fortunate on this occasion. Psammetichus was dead, and Necho (609-594 B.C.) was willing enough to respond, for he saw in this appeal an opportunity to recover the ancient glories of the Egyptian empire in Asia. The Assyrian king, heartened by promises of Egyptian support, advanced into Mesopotamia, and

in turn invested Harran. But the operation miscarried. Deficient in siege artillery, the Assyrians could neither breach the walls, nor the raw levies repel sorties of the defence, and news of the approach of a relieving force added to Ashuruballit's perplexities. He raised the siege and fell back on the Euphrates. Pursuit was pressed; the retirement developed into a rout. Trapped on the river bank, Ashuruballit and his army perished.

This brief and inglorious campaign extinguished the last hope of saving the Assyrian empire. Without a capital or a king, Assyria was irretrievably lost, and the road to Egypt open to the conquerors. Nabopolassar let the opportunity go by. Exhausted by fatigue and privation, the ageing king withdrew to Babylon, leaving recovery of Assyrian provinces west of the Euphrates to a more convenient hour. The cautious Psammetichus would have rejoiced at his escape, and stood strictly on the defensive: his more ardent son, in no mind to disperse the army he had been at pains to assemble in Egypt, took advantage of Nabopolassar's inaction to undertake a war of conquest. So in 608 B.C. he set out to add Phoenicia and Syria to his dominions. All went well with the advance, till entering the plain of Esdraclon he discovered that Josiah, King of Judah, was barring the way at Megiddo. Having counted upon Judah as a neutral if not a friendly power, the news puzzled him, and imagining some misunderstanding, he asked, 'What have I to do with thee, King of Judah. I come not against thee this day, but against the house with which I have war.' And to fortify the assurance, he imprudently added, 'God hath commanded me to make haste. Forbear from meddling with God who is with me, that he destroy thee not.'¹ Josiah's hostility presumably sprang from suspicion of Necho's intentions. Certainly it was no fault of the prophets of the period if he doubted them, since from their lips there had issued a stream of warnings against the folly of trusting the word of Egypt. If Phoenicia and Syria were the first victims of Necho's ambition, assuredly Judah would be the second. Let the king beware of Egypt, a treacherous friend, a relentless enemy. Such was their cry, a theme that never varied.

Abandoning further parley, Necho continued his advance. Megiddo was a melancholy memory for the house of Judah: before the sun had set, its army had been routed, and the king,

¹ 2 Chron. xxxv. 20.

mortally wounded, been carried off the field. The triumph was that of the Greek mercenaries, and Necho honourably acknowledged the debt by presenting the armour he had worn in the battle to the temple of Apollo at Branchidae, a suburb of Miletus. At Riblah in the valley of the Orontes (the Nahr el-Assy) he halted to review his plans. A reconnaissance indicated no concentration of Chaldaeans in the vicinity of the Euphrates, and there remained thus only the future of Judah to be considered. All depended upon the choice of a king to succeed the dead Josiah, and Necho was pondering over the selection when he learnt that Jerusalem had forestalled him. Passing over the claims of Eliakim, the elder prince, the citizens had elected the younger Jehoahaz, notoriously pro-Chaldaean and anti-Egyptian. It was an insolence that Necho countered by imposing a tribute of 100 talents of silver and one talent of gold, and by summoning the two brothers to Riblah to hear his decision. Jehoahaz was deposed and Eliakim (Jehoiakim) made king in his brother's place.¹ Satisfied with the fruits of the campaign, Necho at this point returned home and applied himself to the development of commerce. Arabia and the distant East offered obvious possibilities, provided that he could discover an alternative route, cheaper and more expeditious, than while carrying Egyptian produce by river to Coptos, transported it across the desert and at a port on the Red Sea shipped it on sea-going craft.

Confronted by an analogous problem, Solomon had solved it by creating a transit depot on the gulf of Aqaba: but the procedure had entailed a preliminary caravan stage, that Necho proposed to eliminate in his project by using the Nile to unite the Mediterranean and Red Seas. If the conception was not original, seeing that Strabo and Pliny attribute it to a legendary Sesostris, probably Ramesses II, it must be confessed that the task before Necho was formidable. Communication between the seas had ceased at some remote and undetermined period, and a massive sandbank now separated the Bitter Lakes from the Arabian Gulf. In place of attempting to cut a passage through it, Necho designed a canal that took off from the Nile at Bubastis, and in the words of Herodotus ran 'along the Arabian side of the Egyptian plain as far as the hills opposite Memphis',² where it seems to have turned south to discharge into the gulf.

¹ 2 Kings xxiii. 35.

² Herodotus II, 158.

The undertaking proved too great for completion. Apart from physical difficulties, pestilence and exhaustion took heavy toll of labour employed, since Herodotus reports that 120,000 souls perished in the task of excavating the bed 'on account of the crookedness of its course'. The mortality perhaps did not unduly disturb Necho: nor indeed was there any reason why it should, seeing that the Egyptian people were his serfs. None the less, he could not afford to depopulate his kingdom at this rate, and he asked counsel of a popular oracle. The answer was disconcerting. He was advised to abandon the undertaking on the ground that 'he was labouring for the barbarian [foreigner]', and perhaps as much can be said of De Lesseps' more famous achievement. Since the projected canal could only accommodate river craft, Necho built at its southern extremity a cargo-carrying fleet. The construction could have been no easy matter. Egypt was treeless, and timber suitable for sea-going ships only obtainable from the Lebanon. Occupation of the valley of the Orontes perhaps solved that difficulty; the Red Sea ships were duly built, and reluctant to see the pains wasted, Necho manned half a dozen of them with Phoenician seamen, bidding their commander find his way round Africa and the Pillars of Hercules into the Mediterranean. Three years passed before Egypt had news from the expedition. Twice in the course of the voyage the admiral had hauled his ships ashore and planted crops: then reaping their harvest he had put to sea again. In this wise, he accomplished the circumnavigation of Africa, and brought his squadron to anchor in the Nile.¹ It was a noble achievement that Hanno, the Carthaginian seaman, tried but failed to imitate.

Meanwhile, in Babylon, Nabopolassar was meditating recovery of Assyrian sovereignty over Western Asia, and in 605 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar, his son, advanced to Carchemish. The report sent Necho hurrying to the front, and collecting as best he could his army, scattered for convenience of supply, he gave battle outside its walls. Outmanoeuvred by Nebuchadnezzar, a better commander than his father, he had to beat a hasty retreat. Jeremiah's warning had come to pass. 'The nations have heard thy shame,' he apostrophized the dispirited Necho, 'and the earth is full of thy cry.' Prolonged inaction, always ruinous to an army in the field, may have been one cause of the reverse, an under-

¹ *Herodotus* IV, 42.

estimate of Nebuchadnezzar's quality a second: whatever the reason, Necho was taken at a disadvantage. Certainly his strategy was uninspiring. A more astute commander would have abandoned Carchemish to its fate, and employed the respite in concentrating all his available resources in Southern Canaan. Had Necho done so, and on ground of his own choice, he could have confidently awaited attack. As it was, he embarked upon a series of rearguard actions that brought him more than once within distance of complete disaster. In the end he led his army back to Egypt, though that good fortune must in part be attributed to Nebuchadnezzar himself for breaking off pursuit. His presence was needed in Babylon. Nabopolassar had died, and a younger brother was angling for the succession.

'The king of Egypt came not again any more out of his land: for the king of Babylon had taken from the river of Egypt unto the river Euphrates all that pertained to the king of Egypt,' says the author of the Second Book of Kings (xxiv. 7), and he wrote no more than the truth. Necho indeed at this point seems to have come to a composition with Nebuchadnezzar presumably on the basis of the withdrawal of Egyptian pretensions in Asia, and of the transfer to Babylon of the tribute paid by Judah to Egypt. But Jehoiakim of Judah, the successor of Josiah, had been no party of the second condition, nor was he in a mood to become a vassal of Nebuchadnezzar, in the confident expectation that Necho would support the defiance. There was little likelihood that the latter would listen to any such alliance, or that he would quarrel with Babylon to gratify Judah, and an embassy that travelled to Sais to beg delivery of Urijah, a political fugitive, a disciple of Jeremiah,¹ had returned to Jerusalem with the disappointing information that Necho was sympathetic, but unwilling to be more.

Retribution speedily descended upon the rash Jehoiakim. A mixed force of Chaldees, Syrians and Moabites appeared before Jerusalem, took the king prisoner, and carried off 'the vessels of the House of the Lord'.² In Babylon, the captive languished, sick in mind and in body, till Nebuchadnezzar permitted him to return home to die. Jehoiakim, his successor, no wiser than his father, did not heed the moral. He continued to defy Babylon, and suffered for the imprudence. A fresh army fell upon

¹ Jer. xxvi. 20.

² 2 Chron. xxxvi. 6.

Jerusalem (597 B.C.) that on this occasion made no distinction between the king and his subjects. At the heels of Johiakin, his mother and his wives there marched to Babylon 'all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths' so that 'none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land'.¹ The drastic punishment of Jerusalem contained also a lesson for Necho. Thus far, Nebuchadnezzar had faithfully observed his compact with Egypt: but Chaldaean temper was uncertain and lust for conquest proverbial, and at this stage Necho prudently reviewed the defences of his kingdom. Since they depended upon the capacity of Daphnae to hold up an invader at the frontier, they were not ideal. The swamps and marshlands on the left flank of the fortress forbade, no doubt, an enemy passage between it and the sea: but on the right or southern flank an enterprising commander could have little difficulty in penetrating unnoticed the Wādi ʿt-Ṭumilāt before Egypt was aware of his presence. To prevent the contingency Necho now excavated a wide and deep drain or moat that an invader must cross before executing that purpose. It was a formidable obstacle to force.

Apart from this emergency work there is nothing to record of Necho's last years, and beyond a stela in the Paris Museum representing the king in the presence of the Theban triad, an inscription in the Serapeum and a scarab in Cairo commemorating his military exploits, nothing of importance has survived to mark the reign.

Despite the prosecution of war and the construction of unproductive public works, Egypt had continued to prosper, and Psammetichus II (594-588 B.C.) entered upon a promising inheritance. He was a sovereign of a different type from his father: distinguished chiefly by a tender regard for the habitations of the gods of Egypt. It was high time that a King of Egypt interested himself in the maintenance of temples and chapels. Many were in grave danger of collapse, some mutilated by the Assyrian soldier, others victims of the priestly custodians' neglect. Here and there a public-spirited noble of the type of Mentemhē,² a steward of the divine votress in Thebes or of Hōr in command of the garrison at Heracleopolis, had laboured to repair decay; but such instances were rare, and the throne had not urged others

¹ 2 Kings xxiv. 14.

² His portrait bust is in the Cairo Museum.

to follow the example. Nor could the priesthoods plead as apology lack of means. That excuse, valid enough during the Assyrian occupation, was untenable in the prosperous years that followed, when wealthy and pious individuals came forward to enrich temple revenue. And Psammetichus did not stop at exhortation. As an example to the indolent priesthood, he enlarged and perhaps even rebuilt, in Sais, the temple of Neith, and within its precincts raised pyramids and obelisks to mark his respect for the patron divinity of the family.

So far as the Thebaid was concerned the neglect may have been attributable in part to the advanced age of Nitocris, daughter of the first Psammetichus, and created divine votress in the ninth year of his reign. The air of Thebes appears to have suited the royal princesses who held the office, seeing that in a hundred and fifty years only three had been nominated. Being within distance of her eightieth birthday, Nitocris, it must be said, honourably fulfilled the tradition of longevity, and the new king may have thought it time his aunt gave way to a younger member of the family. Whatever the responsibilities of a divine votress were, among them must have been supervision of temple property, and it is indicative of the throne's indifference to Thebes that the two first kings of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty did not remind the divine votress of this elementary duty. The nomination of a successor to Nitocris, in short, was long overdue, and Psammetichus' appointment of his daughter 'Ankhnesneferibrē, suggestive of a welcome interest in Thebes. Of this princess' arrival an alabaster stela in Cairo records the details. She was the last of the divine votresses, and was still officiating when Cambyses invaded Egypt sixty-eight years later.

It was this vicarious interest in Thebes that perhaps persuaded Psammetichus II to pay homage to the counterpart of Amen-Rē' in Phoenicia, and to this end, escorted by a company of priests, he paid a ceremonial visit to Byblus in Phoenicia. There Ramesses III, pausing in his campaign, had raised an imposing temple to the greater glory of the Theban god, and its citizens had cheerfully admitted the Egyptian divinity into their extensive pantheon. In the course of centuries the reputation of the shrine had grown at the expense of the local Baal and Astaroth, and Psammetichus' visit excited enthusiasm. It was a pilgrimage that had no political or military motive, and the fact that a King of

Egypt could travel freely in the dominions of Nebuchadnezzar is significant of that monarch's friendly sentiment towards Egypt during this reign.

The visit was probably shortened by news of hostile intentions on the part of Ethiopia. It was rumoured that Ethiopian troops were massing in the neighbourhood of the second cataract, that their commander was contemplating invasion of Egypt. The truth was doubtful, but the information was sufficiently substantial to frighten the garrison at Syene into appealing for reinforcement, and for the royal advisers in Sais into urging the king to return home. So Psammetichus hurried back to his capital, to dispatch up the river an expeditionary force of mercenaries and conscripts. The pains were wasted: the Ethiopian troops withdrew to Napata, and at Abu Simbel, within a few miles of the second cataract, the Egyptian commander halted. The ardent Necho no doubt would have pressed on: the more prudent son from his headquarters on Elephantine Island recalled the expedition. But if an inscription scratched by 'those who sailed with Psammetichus son of Theocles' on one colossus guarding the portals of the temple of Abu Simbel hardly confirms Herodotus' statement that Psammetichus 'attacked Ethiopia', it provides a hint of the distribution of military responsibility in Saite times. Supreme command lay in the hands of this son of Theocles, certainly a Greek mercenary; but Petasimto (Pedi-horsamtoui), whose sarcophagus is in the Cairo Museum, an Egyptian, led the mercenary wing, while Amasis ('Ahmosē'), also an Egyptian to judge from his name, was in charge of the Egyptian contingent.

Belief in Egyptian wisdom must have long been current in Greece or Elis would not have commissioned a deputation to inquire whether the court of Sais could suggest any improvement in the procedure of the games held every fourth year at Olympus in honour of Zeus under the auspices of their states. Evil-minded men were impugning the awards of the judges, hinting that they favoured Elean competitors at the expense of strangers, and Elis, indignant at suspicion of partiality, invited Psammetichus' advice. Sagaciously enough the King of Egypt first asked if 'the contests were open to all Greeks, and whether they belonged to Elis or to any other state': and on being informed of the absence of any restriction, observed that in these conditions a stranger matched

with an Elean competitor might surely complain if the judges awarded the prize to their own citizen. 'If the Eleans desired to manage the games with fairness, and if this was the object of the deputation's visit to Egypt, he counselled Elis to confine the contests to strangers and allow no Elean to be a candidate.' The advice indicates some knowledge of human nature, and of the fallibility of that of the Greek in particular.¹

The choice of Egypt as an umpire was intelligible enough in the light of the custom of leading cities of Greece to borrow from Egyptian mythology a legendary personality, and credit him with the foundation of their state. Thus Athens claimed Cecrops of Sais as her founder, and Argos the fugitive Danaus as her first king, both influenced perhaps by desire to secure a respectable ancestry. Throughout the sixth century before Christ, individual Greeks, some eager to discover new trade openings, others to study Egyptian history and philosophy, were crossing the Mediterranean. Among the visitors were men already distinguished in the world of learning: the ascetic Pythagoras of Samos, Thales of Miletus, founder of the first Greek school of philosophy, Hecataeus the geographer, Solon the poet, legislator and statesman. It is doubtful if the last-named found much to admire in Egyptian administration and legislation. He may have borrowed from one or the other his famous *seisachtheia* or relief of defaulting debtors from the pain of death or exile, and the obligation imposed upon all citizens to produce proofs of earning an honest livelihood: but Greek conception of political liberty was foreign to Egyptian thought, and Solon could have found little to praise in the political institutions of Egypt.

Psammetichus' reign was too short to leave a mark upon Egyptian administration, but it would be in keeping with his disposition if he relieved for economic and possibly even humane reasons the heavy incidence of conscription and forced labour that his father had imposed on the kingdom. On the other hand, he was no idealist, and subsequent history suggests that he not only maintained the number of mercenaries, but perhaps improved their quality by cultivating Greece as a recruiting area. It is also conceivable that its exploitation led him to create a navy for service in the Mediterranean. Necho no doubt had made a beginning in the matter: but the credit of establishing Egypt as a

¹ *Herodotus* II, 160. The expedition may be dated to 589 B.C.

naval power seems to belong rather to the son. From the Greek islands of Aegina and Samos in particular he obtained an abundant supply of seafaring men and shipwrights. With the aid of the second he contrived to build at Pelusium a fleet that, navigated by Greeks and manned by Egyptian oarsmen, proved a match for the hitherto invincible Phoenician marine. Be this as it may, Apries, the Hophra of Jeremiah (588-568 B.C.), could not complain of his father's¹ indifference to the military needs of the kingdom, nor did he hesitate to make use of the new navy. He was a young and hot-headed king, to whom the welfare of his subjects was of less importance than the glory of the throne. The reoccupation of Phoenicia seemed to him of greater urgency than the development of trade and, pressed by his military advisers, he determined to challenge Nebuchadnezzar's sovereignty over Western Asia. Conditions favoured the adventure. Nebuchadnezzar was busy in supporting Median ambition in Asia Minor: Phoenicia itself was simmering with discontent. Chaldaean rule was unpopular, and profoundly resented. In the north, Tyre and Sidon had denounced it: in the south, Moab, Edom and Ammon were refusing to pay tribute, and Judah, still relying upon Egypt, was encouraging their revolt. Such was the situation when Apries in the spring of 587 B.C. took the field.

The history of the campaign is obscure. Herodotus dismisses it with the comment that Apries 'marched an army to attack Sidon, and fought a battle with the king of Tyre by sea'. Other fragmentary sources confirm and supplement this bald statement, indicating that an Egyptian expeditionary force marched into Canaan, while a fleet sailed to Sidon. There the admiral disembarked his marines, carried the city by storm and sailed to Tyre. But the Tyrians had not defied Nebuchadnezzar to become the subjects of another power and, doubtful of Egypt's honesty, declined point blank to allow the squadron to enter the port. To emphasize the refusal, they manned their fleet and prepared to give battle. It was a challenge that the Egyptian commander accepted: a naval engagement followed, and the Tyrian ships with difficulty regained shelter within the harbour. There was no more to be done, and the Egyptian squadron steered for Cyprus. It raided the coastline, destroyed Phoenician settlements and expelled their inhabitants; but without troops, occupation of the

¹ The head of a seated statue of Prammethichus is in the British Museum.

island was impracticable, and the Egyptian commander sailed home.

Apart from testifying to the spirited seamanship of the Egyptian commander and his crew, these naval demonstrations injured rather than helped the fortunes of the campaign. Tyre's distrust of Egypt's intentions was shared by its neighbours, and Apries found advance to the Euphrates imperilled by the presence of enemies rather than allies. Hard upon news that Nebuchadnezzar had left Babylon, came information that he had established himself at Riblah on the Orontes. It was unpleasant hearing for Apries: his road to the north was blocked, his expectation of an easy triumph disappointed. The campaign had achieved no more than the pillage of a few semi-independent cities, and perhaps the withdrawal of Chaldaean forces from Judah, or Jeremiah would not have recorded 'Pharaoh's army was come forth out of Egypt: and when the Chaldaeans that besieged Jerusalem heard tidings of them, they departed'.¹ The prophet's optimism was short-lived: the next moment he was warning the king that 'Pharaoh's army, which is come forth to help, shall return to Egypt into their own land'.²

It is improbable that Apries, like his grandfather Necho, ever intended to commit himself seriously in Judah. The objective of the campaign had been recovery of Phoenicia, and once its achievement became impracticable, his interest in Asia ceased. He may have maintained for a while his occupation of Southern Canaan, but on a fresh investment of Jerusalem, he fell back upon Egypt, leaving Zedekiah to bear the burden of defying Nebuchadnezzar. Disappointed but undismayed, Zedekiah prepared to withstand assault. He provisioned Jerusalem, strengthened the walls and called upon its citizens irrespective of age and station to man them. The siege proved a protracted business. Unlike the Assyrians, the enemy were not masters of the art of siege warfare, nor was Chaldaean artillery as effective. The battering-ram could make no impression upon the defences or the catapult upon the defenders till the Chaldaean engineer had mounted both on earthworks that overtopped the ramparts. Operations dragged on for a year, and Jerusalem might have escaped destruction had not pestilence and famine accomplished what assault failed to achieve. So desperate then became the situation within

¹ Jer. xxxvii. 5.

² Jer. xxxvii. 7.

the city that 'the men of war fled by night . . . and the king went the way towards the plain'.¹ It was the end: and Jerusalem had capitulated (586 B.C.). Incensed by resistance, Nebuchadnezzar was in no mood to show mercy. Zedekiah was blinded, his sons were slain; the temple was despoiled of its last possessions and the city was destroyed by fire. It was a tragic ending to a memorable siege.²

'A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentations and bitter weeping: Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted,' wailed the prophet,³ as he thought of the hostages awaiting in Ramah their melancholy march to the Euphrates. But if their lot was distressing, the future of the 'vine-dressers and husbandmen' left in the city was no less forbidding. Outside the walls there was little prospect of sustenance or of safety. The countryside was devastated, brigandage was rampant. Chaldaean foraging parties had ruined the first: Chaldaean authority was indifferent to the existence of the second. The appointment of the Hebrew Gedaliah as commissioner temporarily relieved the anarchy: but unhappily at the moment his offer of amnesty to all marauders who laid down their arms was bearing fruit he was murdered. Then the better-class refugees gave themselves up for lost, till the word went round that in Egypt they would find a new home. Comforted by the thought, they marched to Bethlehem and asked counsel of Jeremiah the prophet. The prophet bade his hearers, in the Name of the Lord God, to remain in Judah, adding: 'If you say, . . . we will go into the land of Egypt, where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor have hunger of bread . . . then it shall come to pass, that the sword, which you feared, shall overtake you there. . . .'⁴ Simultaneously Ezekiel, a captive in Babylon, also denounced the exodus. 'Son of man,' he warned his countrymen, 'set thy face against Pharaoh.'

Neither warning accomplished its purpose, and a large company of men, women and children set out for Egypt. Daphnae received them hospitably. In the royal apartments of the fortress were lodged Zedekiah's daughters; within its precincts their companies found accommodation. But Daphnae was a military post and not a refuge camp, and Egypt could not tolerate a

¹ 2 Kings xxv. 4.

² Jer. xxxi. 5.

³ Josephus, *Antiquities* X, 4.

⁴ Jer. xliii. 13-16.

permanent Hebrew settlement on the frontier. So the fugitives dispersed: some found home in Tanis and Memphis, others 'in the country of Pathros' or Upper Egypt. In this wise was fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah concerning the destruction of Jerusalem. 'In that day,' he exclaimed, 'shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan.'¹

Egypt was now approaching the zenith of her prosperity in the Saïte period. No shadow of war darkened the horizon, and Apries devoted himself in those peaceful years to commemorate his reign according to Pharaonic customs. He built largely. In Sais he set up in the temple of Neith two lofty obelisks to match the pair presented by his father, and designed a handsome mausoleum to hold his body after death. In Memphis he raised a spacious palace for his pleasure during life. It was an imposing structure that with the precincts covered an area of two acres, enclosed by a massive wall crowned at each corner by watch towers and dwarfing neighbouring temples and habitations, and in the distant oasis of Baharia he founded two temples. Thebes, in common with his predecessors, he seems to have neglected: a natural sequence, no doubt, of the removal of all political and administrative authority to Lower Egypt. Thus the adoration of the Theban triad was transferred to the Osirian, and Apries on a Serapeum stela speaks of himself only as 'beloved of Apis, son of Osiris'.

All, in short, would have been well with the kingdom of Egypt but for a growing jealousy of the Greek. Directed in its early stages against the mercenary and confined to the Hermotybian and Kalasirians warrior classes, it now embraced the trader also, and had fastened upon the entire Egyptian community. How far Apries' predecessors had ignored the feeling is uncertain: but it seems as far as the Hermotybians and Kalasirians were concerned that they still possessed their traditional privilege of guarding the king's person. It was a service handsomely recompensed, if the liberal rations of four pounds of baked bread, two pounds of beef and four cups of wine daily is a guide, and Apries' substitution of mercenaries for the duty provoked widespread irritation. It was probably only one of many privileges

¹ Isa. xix. 18. A limestone stela in the Cairo Museum representing a strange god dressed as an Asiatic, standing on a lion, found in Daphnae, probably is a relic of this Hebrew migration to Egypt.

that passed at this period from Egyptian into Greek hands, and an ill-considered experiment intended to soothe Egyptian susceptibilities led to Apries' downfall.

The occasion originated in a quarrel between Adicran, the paramount chieftain of Libya, and Battus, King of Cyrene, one of the numerous Greek colonies established overseas in the seventh century before Christ. At the outset Libya had welcomed the strangers, had traded and inter-married with them. But as Cyrene prospered, its population increased, and to find room for the newcomers, Battus forcibly dispossessed of their soil Libyans in the vicinity of the city. To his protests, Adicran received no answer, and interpreting the silence as tantamount to a declaration of war, he appealed to Egypt for assistance. Apries hesitated: sympathy counselled one course, common sense another. If names are an index of race, it is likely that from the Twenty-second Dynasty onwards there ran through the veins of Egyptian kings a strain of Libyan blood, and Apries may reasonably have desired to help a kinsman, however distant the connection. But common sense forbade yielding to the impulse. The citizens of Cyrene were wholly Greek, and Apries could not tell how his own mercenaries would react to the knowledge. Rather than contend with men of their own race, they might decline to march, or in the heat of battle pass over to the enemy. Already their temper was doubtful. Their discipline had been at fault in Aswān, and only the prompt arrest of the ringleaders by Neshōr, governor of the province, stopped open mutiny.¹

To soothe the national feeling, Apries dispatched to the Libyan front an expeditionary force of Hermotybians and Kalasirians unsupported by mercenaries. It was against his better judgement. The Egyptian soldier, lightly armed and poorly commanded, was no match for the Greek, and Apries could have hardly doubted the issue of the campaign. At the spring of Theste, a watering place in the Irasa district, the two armies met, and in the words of Herodotus: "The Egyptians who had never before made trial of the prowess of the Greeks, and so thought meanly of them, were routed with such slaughter that few got back home".²

To cover the shame of defeat the survivors vowed that Apries had betrayed them, that in concert with the enemy he had

¹ Inscription on a statue of Neshōr in the Louvre.

² *Herodotus* IV, 159.

planned their destruction. Already incensed by the king's partiality for the Greek, the credulous Egyptian did not stay to question the report, but denounced the king as the author of the misfortune. The air was charged with whispers of treachery, and daring men clamoured for the removal from the throne of this traitor to his subjects. From murmurs of this type to revolution is a short step: all that the transition needs is a leader, and unwittingly Apries supplied the want. Misjudging the extent of the resentment, he sent Amasis ('Aḥmosē), president of the royal court of justice and presumably commander of the Egyptian contingent on the abortive expedition to Ethiopia in the preceding reign, to parley with a gathering of nobles and notables in the Eastern Delta. He was reasoning with them when one of the listeners, stealing from behind, set on the speaker's head a helmet, crying, 'Behold our king,' and Amasis, succumbing to temptation, accepted the honour. The indignant Apries sent Patarbemis, a chamberlain, to bid Amasis return at once to Sais. It was an invitation that in the circumstances the latter was unlikely to accept: in place he answered menacingly 'that he would shortly come, and bring others with him'.

Stung by the insolence and miscalculating his opponent's strength, Apries, at the head of a handful of mercenaries, sallied out of Sais to crush the rebels. At Momemphis (Menūf) battle was joined. The mercenaries fought bravely till, overpowered by weight of numbers, they fell back, leaving the king a prisoner on the field. Amasis behaved magnanimously: sparing Apries his life, claiming as a reward for his own services only a co-regency. The clemency was highly unpopular: a shout was raised that Apries must pay for the betrayal of his Egyptian soldiers in Libya by death, and reluctant to jeopardize his own situation by unheeding the clamour, Amasis delivered the king to the hands of the mob. Such is the account of Apries' end as narrated by Herodotus; a stela in Cairo provides another sequel to the battle of Momemphis. According to the inscription, Apries, eluding his guards, slipped down the river, and from the sea coast summoned to his standard all loyal subjects. The response was meagre: Lower Egypt stood solidly behind Amasis, and only the bewildered mercenaries joined the king. At Andropolis, Amasis believed he had trapped the latter. He was mistaken: handling his forces skilfully, Apries withdrew in good order and resorted

to guerilla tactics. But warfare of this type to be successful implies support from a united peasantry, and in this instance the converse was the truth. Within six months the cause of the king was lost. Desertion had thinned his ranks, the more venal mercenary was hurrying to offer his services to the enemy. Taken by surprise when afloat on the river, Apries was slain.¹

¹ The outline of a figure of Apries cut on a limestone stela is in the British Museum; and a stela in Cairo records the triumph of Amasis and his subsequent coronation.

THE TWENTY-SIXTH DYNASTY (*continued*)

THE peasant laid down his arms, the tumult subsided and Amasis (568-526/25 B.C.), the Sincit of contemporary inscriptions, ascended the throne. His boisterous manners and ready wit have passed into history, and legends concerning his personality have afforded posterity entertainment. Nevertheless, these posthumous tributes to his attributes as a man must not obscure his virtues as a king. To a capacity for anticipating the future, he joined determination to avoid entanglement in adventures, and by a judicious use of both gifts he piloted his kingdom undisturbed by war and insurrection through a stormy period of history. It could have been no easy task in the beginning. Abroad, Amasis had to keep a watchful eye upon Babylon; at home, upon a court jealous of his supremacy. Some of its members were his secret enemies, speaking of him as a traitor and a regicide, and his popularity in the countryside added fuel to their bitterness. A more hasty sovereign would have given short thrift to these detractors: but the cautious Amasis procured their silence by burying Apries with great pomp in the royal sepulchre of Sais, and by legitimizing his succession through marriage with Ankhesneferibré', divine votress of Thebes and daughter of Psammetichus II. Simultaneously, he kept a sharp eye upon his private interests. Revolution is a double-edged instrument, since the leader of one may become the victim of another, and to safeguard his person Amasis formed out of the mercenaries who had fought for Apries a bodyguard.

The amnesty was general, and presently Amasis could count upon a respectable mercenary army. The experiment was a daring one, seeing that Apries had lost his life through his partiality for the Greeks; but Amasis, conscious that Egyptian emotion once spent is rarely capable of resurrection, took the risk, and the sequel justified the judgement. Reversing the practice established by the first Psammetichus, he quartered in Memphis and Sais all mercenaries, confiding the task of guarding the frontiers to Egyptian hands. Fear of concerted conspiracy

against the throne had influenced Psammetichus' dispersal of his professional soldiers, but the procedure, reasonable enough from that point of view, was less so in a second, since it deprived the king of concentrating at a critical moment his only reliable troops. As matters stood, an invader from the east, breaking through or masking the defences, could occupy Memphis before the garrison of Aswān was even aware of his presence in Egypt. Either Amasis was bolder or he felt better assured than Psammetichus of the spirit of the mercenary soldier. It was no doubt a different one from that of a century earlier, and the need of seeking volunteers from abroad had become less necessary. A substantial percentage of the earlier Ionians and Carians had remained in Egypt on expiration of their term of service, had married Greek women so long as the supply lasted, and Egyptian when it failed, and their offspring on reaching manhood had followed the paternal profession. Their military value may have been smaller: on the other hand, they were easier to handle and more attached to the person of their employer. The procedure was well received: Egypt was gratified by the knowledge that her own soldiers were guarding the frontiers, while the mercenary rejoiced to exchange for tedious frontier duty the comfort of a standing camp.

There remained the problem of the Greek trader, whose presence was as little agreeable in Egyptian eyes as that of the man-of-arms. Conscious of the irritation, yet equally sensible of the need of encouraging trade, Amasis found a solution in restricting discharge and loading of cargo to the Canopic arm of the Nile. Confiscation of the offending ship and its contents were the penalty of disobedience, and since this king had a habit of keeping his word, few owners presumed to contravene the edict. There was, indeed, no loophole of escape from it. Stress of weather might excuse a ship's captain taking shelter in another branch of the river,¹ but he must there await a shift of wind to carry him to Canopus, or 'take his wares all round the Delta', and so bring them to Naucratis which had an exclusive privilege.²

The transformation of Naucratis from an insignificant village

¹ According to Strabo (Bk. XVII, ch. 1, par. 18), in addition to the Pelusiatic and Canopic channels that marked the eastern and western limits of the Delta, the Nile emptied itself through five other mouths: the Balbitinic (Rosetta), the Sybennitic (Burlos), the Phanitic (Damiatta), the Mendesian and the Tanitic.

² *Herodotus* II, 179.

or trading station into a prosperous commercial town was a great achievement. Situated on the left branch of the Canopic arm of the river and within easy distance of Sais on the east, it was admirably placed for Amasis' purpose, and within its boundaries there were presently gathered the trading communities hitherto scattered over the Delta. But if the sufferers from the decree investing Naucratis with the exclusive privilege of trading closed their existing establishments at Pelusium, Tanis, Bubastis and elsewhere reluctantly, the regret could only have been short-lived, since Naucratis, as a trading station, was immeasurably superior to its rivals. Its proximity to the capital was one advantage, the patronage of the king a second, the greater depth of the Canopic arm a third and even more important. Light draught sea-going vessels could sail to the port of discharge and so avoid not only the delay of transshipping cargo landed at the mouth of the river into canal craft, but also payment of vexatious taxes imposed by innumerable local authorities upon merchandize in transit.

Nor were these the only advantages of Naucratis. The Greek had no longer to pursue his client. Roles were reversed, and it was the turn now of the Egyptian merchant to seek the Greek. Happily the first also found it more convenient to transact business in a central market, where values were stabilized and disputes settled by responsible adjudicators, and satisfied on this point, Amasis considered how he could tempt a better class of Greeks to settle in Naucratis. The concession of municipal autonomy solved the difficulty. To the Greek the belief that liberty to frame his own laws, to elect his own magistrates and freely criticize their administration was a priceless possession, and Amasis' recognition of the fact is a tribute to his shrewdness. Once assured of his political liberty, the enterprising Greek merchants and bankers, in a position to finance undertakings that promised returns, hurried to Naucratis, and on their heels followed men who had only talent to recommend them. Perhaps the capitalist at the outset was disappointed since Egypt remained doubtful of the foreigner, and exchange of produce on a large scale was difficult with a suspicious community. But if the capitalist stumbled, the artist did not. The craze for statuettes of gods and animals, of amulets and charms, of scarabs and seals, of glass and pottery still flourished, and the Greek was presently

undermining the once comfortable monopoly of the Egyptian craftsman in this market. There streamed also into Naucratis less desirable visitors: women for the most part, less remarkable for virtue than for charm of person, so that Herodotus was moved to speak of the town as 'somehow a place where such women are most attractive'. Doricha, mistress of Charaxus, the brother of Sappho, was one of the early visitors. Rhodopis, a Thracian slave girl reported 'to have amassed great wealth for a person in her condition', a second. Obviously, the well-to-do Greek of Naucratis needed distraction.

Hardly had Amasis' mercenaries taken up their new quarters than disconcerting information sent them hurrying back to the frontier. It was reported that an army designed for the invasion of Egypt was assembling in Babylon, that its advanced guard was already on the march. The news pained and surprised Egypt, unconscious of having given provocation or offence. She had consistently abstained from alliances hostile to Babylon, had accepted unprotestingly that power's occupation of Phoenicia and Canaan and had expected Nebuchadnezzar to reciprocate these friendly measures. But that king had a long memory for injuries and grievances, real and imaginary. The protracted resistance of Tyre, the need of supporting Cyaxares, his father-in-law, and the embellishment of Babylon to gratify a caprice of his queen delayed his intended vengeance; but once free from embarrassment elsewhere, he meditated the punishment of Egypt. Some such reconstruction of the background is reasonable, if the fortunes of the campaign that followed are less easy to trace. Beyond a mutilated Babylonian chronicle, posterity has no source of information, and the chronicle itself is sadly incomplete. Its story amounts only to this, that 'in the 37th year of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon (the troops) of Egypt to do battle came . . . (Ama) Su, king of Egypt, hid troops (levied) . . . Ku of the city of Putu-yawan a distant land which is in the midst of the sea . . . many . . . which were in Egypt . . . he levied for his assistance'.¹ A battle seems to have followed, and the Chaldaean army to have remained master of the field. Ingenious commentators identify Amasis with Su, and Putu-yawan with the home of his mercenaries. Both hypotheses may well be

¹ See Chapter XIV of *Cambridge Ancient History*: the translation is that of Sidney Smith of the British Museum.

accurate: less likely to be true is the tradition that Nebuchadnezzar crossed the Nile, founded a new Babylon at the apex of the Delta, and overran Libya. In short, Jeremiah's confident prediction¹ that the King of Babylon would set his throne upon 'the entry of Pharaoh's house in Tahpanhes' needs confirmation.

Whatever the outcome of the campaign, it neither affected the welfare of Naucratis, nor checked the ambition of citizens to provide themselves with the constitution common to all city states. Among them first and foremost was a patron divinity and a temple for the god's habitation. To the Greek, incapable of separating religious obligations from civic or of divesting sacred festivals of political significance, the existence of a temple and patron divinity was a matter of capital importance. Hitherto the trader and the mercenary, timid of provoking Egyptian fanaticism, had contrived to manage without either; salving their consciences by equating Greek with Egyptian divinities, Zeus with Osiris, Athene with Neith and so on, and by participating in local festivals to demonstrate a fraternal sympathy. But as Naucratis grew and prospered, the procedure lost its only excuse, and the craving to possess its own temples became insistent. Unhappily the choice of a patron divinity split a community drawn from widely separated areas, homogeneous only in speech and in race, united in brotherhood by no other tie than business, and it could not agree upon the selection of one. Thus came about in course of time the raising of half a dozen shrines to the glory of as many deities. Not every section of the population was in a position to build a temple of its own. The Ionian, Dorian and Aeolian colonists joined forces and raised the Hellenium common to all Hellenic divinities, the men from Aegina, Samos and Miletus erected shrines to Zeus, Hera and Dionysus, the patron deities at home.

Spurred by the example, Amasis began building on his own account. Sais naturally secured the lion's share of the royal attention. Though the seat of the dynasty, it could never hope to rival in the matter of monuments either Thebes or Memphis, nor could Neith challenge the predominance of Amen-Rê or Ptah. But within the nome, the supremacy of that goddess the unbegotten mother of Rê, the sun god of Heliopolis, the source of victory and the inspiration of the annual inundation was

¹ Jer. xliii. 10.

undisputed, and even Osiris, whose shrine stood in rear of Neith's temple, was accounted of less importance. According to Herodotus, to this goddess' temple Amasis added a spacious court or entry, through which the worshippers passed into an avenue flanked by obelisks, statues and sphinxes into the great hall. Nor was this court the king's only tribute to Neith. On Elephantine Island he had cut from the solid rock a chamber made of a single block, that required the labour of 2,000 boatmen and three years of unremitting labour to transport to Sais. In Memphis he embellished the habitation of Ptah with a recumbent colossus of seventy-five feet in length, and two giant statues, and built a shrine to Isis, that Herodotus presumed to be 'a vast structure and well worth seeing'.

But his interest in temples and statuary soon evaporated, and shrines and chapels south of Memphis he neglected as unworthy of his attention. He gave his blessing to any noble or officer of state willing to undertake at his own expense the cost of repairing any temple, but beyond that doubtful patronage he did not go. Thus a certain Pefnefdineit,¹ his chief physician, was graciously permitted to rebuild the temple of Osiris at Abydos, and no doubt other nobles enjoyed the same questionable privilege. On the other hand, in the instance of Lower Egypt the royal patronage was restricted to temples whose oracles spoke the truth, and Amasis happened to be in a position to decide that point for himself. As a young man he had lived beyond his means, and to replenish his purse had contracted the habit of plundering some inoffensive neighbour. If accused of the crime, he would profess his readiness to repair to the nearest oracle and submit to its judgement. He was on pretty safe ground in doing so. Few local priesthoods were likely to decide against this powerful personality of the court. Later, these false oracles had reason to regret their timidity: as king, Amasis took another view of their duty, and punished priesthoods who had overlooked his guilt by ignoring their existence.

Meanwhile, domestic trouble had overtaken Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar had died, and dispute concerning the succession had followed. Eventually Nabonidus, unrelated to the royal family, seized the throne, and all might then have gone well but for the new king's strange ambition to revive the religious prestige of

¹ Statue in the Louvre Museum.

Harran and Ur. To accomplish the design the quicker, he withdrew the garrisons of Phoenicia and Syria, and employed the troops in rebuilding the temples of those ancient capitals. Babylon saw little of Nabonidus during these years: when he was not in Harran or in Ur he kept his court at Teima, a walled city of Northern Arabia. It was a misfortune for the empire. Control of all administration was left to an ineffective son, and the empire began to disintegrate. Cyprus was the first possession to go. Taking advantage of Nabonidus' evacuation of Syria and Palestine, Amasis had seized the island,¹ presumably rather to demonstrate his sympathy with Croesus, King of Lydia, than out of personal interest. More menacing to the stability of Babylon in Mesopotamia was the emergence of Persia, hitherto an unconsidered appanage of Media, as a world power. Under the leadership of Cyrus the great, the Persians had overthrown the Medes, had crossed the Tigris, occupied Northern Mesopotamia and pushed their outposts into Cilicia. Further north, Lydia barred the way, and Cyrus had halted, undecided whether to attack Croesus the king or complete the conquest of Mesopotamia by the occupation of Babylon. His uncertainty ended quickly: Asia Minor was a more attractive objective, and he prepared for the campaign.²

Conscious of the peril, and angling for encouragement from any quarter he was likely to find it, Croesus consulted the oracle of Delphi as to whether he should defy Cyrus or make terms with him: but to the question the oracle, true to tradition, answered ambiguously, 'if he made war upon the Persian he would destroy a mighty empire'. He interpreted the reply in his own favour, and solicited the help of Sparta, Egypt and Babylon. Sensible that they might be the next victims, the three powers promised assistance, and Croesus took up the challenge. But only Egypt honoured her word: Sparta was preoccupied elsewhere, Babylon was half-hearted, and thus Croesus began the campaign with unequal resources. The issue was decided on the plains of Petraea in 546 B.C., where, according to Xenophon, 'the Egyptians alone won themselves renown'.³ For a time it seemed as if their

¹ The date is uncertain. *Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. III, p. 306, tentatively places it at 560 B.C., a later year seems more probable.

² Book VII, *Cyropaedia*. The *Cyropaedia* is to be read with caution: it is political romance rather than serious history.

³ *Cyropaedia*, Bk. VII, 46.

steadiness would give Croesus victory. Drawn up in phalanx formation, armed with long spears and protected by giant shields, Amasis' contingent repelled charge after charge of Persian chariotry and infantry, and had the Lydians on the right and left behaved with equal spirit the day might have ended differently. As it was, the flanks gave way, leaving the phalanx encompassed by the enemy. Seeing no prospect of relief and preferring death to dishonour, its commander ordered his men to sit down covered by their shields. In this wise he continued to hold his ground, till Cyrus, filled with admiration at his courage, offered terms that the phalanx accepted on condition it was not called upon to fight against Croesus. Meanwhile, Croesus, with the remnants of his army, had fallen back on Sardes, and behind its walls, with winter approaching, he believed himself safe till the following spring. But Cyrus was no respecter of seasons: Sardes was captured by stratagem; Croesus became Cyrus' prisoner.

Cyrus exploited the triumph methodically. Northern and Western Asia Minor offered no resistance, Syria and Phoenicia submitted unprotestingly, and only the punishment of Babylon and of Egypt remained for consideration. That of the second, Cyrus reserved for the future, and he marched on Babylon. The city covered an immense area, encompassed by lofty walls, that examination pronounced to be impregnable, and plans for investment were being made when an ingenious lieutenant suggested that diversion of the Euphrates would permit the delivery of an assault. It was a prodigious undertaking: the river cut the city into two halves, and the manoeuvre involved damming the flood upstream and diverting the water into a new bed. But the achievement was accomplished and, covered by darkness, the Persian army one night entered Babylon dry foot. Thus fell in 539 B.C. a city that under one dynasty or another had dominated civilization in the ancient world for many centuries. Its script and tongue had been the medium of diplomatic correspondence throughout the East; its cultural influence had been no less widespread. Israel in particular was in its debt: the legends of the creation and the deluge were of Babylonian origin, the code of Hamurabbi had been the inspiration of Mosaic Law.

Throughout this period Amasis could never have been easy in mind. Babylon, once the main anxiety, was now replaced by Persia, and Amasis dreaded lest he might be the latter's next

victim. The Lydian adventure had been unfortunate. It had cost him a number of mercenaries, expensive and difficult to replace, and had obliged him to abandon Cyprus. Once Persia had occupied Phoenicia, the island was no longer tenable, and if its loss was the only punishment Egypt must suffer for her support of Croesus, Amasis would have been very ready to bear it. That was hardly likely, and he hoped to weather the impending storm by engaging the sympathy of the Greek-speaking people. Cyrene provided a beginning. The king was perpetually breaking with his subjects; Battus in these circumstances was glad enough to enter into a covenant 'whereby Cyrene and Egypt became close friends and allies',¹ and Amasis sealed the alliance by taking to wife Ladika, a Cyrenean lady. Encouraged by this promising start, Amasis sought to propitiate by handsome gifts other cities and colonies. Delphi was among the recipients. Fire had destroyed its temple, and too poor to support more than one-fourth of the cost of rebuilding, the amphictyons or local religious guild appealed for contributions. Egypt responded generously: the king offered a thousand talents of alum, Naucratis subscribed twenty minae. Sparta, Rhodes and Samos also profited. To the first two Amasis presented linen corslets embroidered with gold and the rare 'tree wool' or cotton; to the third, two statues of himself dedicated to Hera, patron divinity of the island. For Polycrates, the ruler, he entertained a tender regard, till the tale of his triumphs grew so long that Amasis bade his friend beware of exciting the envy of heaven. It was advice that Polycrates took to heart, and putting out to sea, he flung overboard his signet ring in the hope of mollifying divine wrath. The sacrifice was in vain: the ring returned to the owner in the belly of a fish, and alarmed by the omen, the superstitious Amasis broke off relations with Samos.

Contrary to expectation, Cyrus gave no thought to Egypt, and Amasis passed his remaining years of life untroubled by the phantom of invasion. It was a happy interlude, the most prosperous period, according to Herodotus, that Egypt had ever known. A series of abundant Niles enriched the country, and its people blessed the ruler who provided them with peace and prosperity. No doubt Amasis was a popular king, or he would

¹ *Herodotus* II, 181.

not have become a dramatic figure of later legend. If he sat late into the night, carousing with companions unworthy of his dignity, he devoted the days to affairs of the state. Certain laws he promulgated were thought worthy of incorporation in Greek codes: notably an ordinance connected with public security, that obliged his subjects to report once a year their means of livelihood on pain of death. The punishment seems disproportionate to the offence, but perhaps necessary in a land where banditry was endemic. His wit was proverbial, his tongue always ready with an adroit answer. Rebuked for the company he kept after dark, he replied smoothly: 'Bowmen bend their bows when they wish to shoot, unbend them when the shooting is over. So it is with men, and knowing this, I divide my life between pastime and business.'

In an expedition against the Massagetae, hill men of Central Asia, Cyrus lost his life (520 B.C.), and Cambyses, 'King of Babel' and co-regent of the Persian empire, ascended the throne. Beyond a reference in Darius' Behistun inscription, the record of Udjahorresneit, an Egyptian noble, the narration of Herodotus and doubtful Persian and Egyptian tradition, nothing is known of Cambyses: but from these meagre sources his personality may be inferred. Divers judgements have been passed by writers of the past upon this king: some denouncing him as depraved and sadistic, others taking a more lenient view as hotheaded and intemperate. Whatever the truth it may fairly be said that Cambyses had inherited little of Cyrus' resource and magnanimity. Two courses confronted him on ascending the throne: he could avenge his father's death by destroying the Massagetae, or he could invade Egypt. Honour as a son committed him to the first, ambition counselled the second. It was, no doubt, the more attractive alternative, and perhaps only the difficulties of the campaign deterred him from setting out at once. But desert warfare was a new experience to Persian armies accustomed to operate in fertile and well-watered territory, and Cambyses stood in need of a counsellor acquainted with its technique. Such a man was not easy to discover, and Cambyses had almost abandoned hope when Phanes, a deserter from Egypt, appeared at the court. Phanes' adventures had been numerous. Pursuit had been hot, and only stratagem saved him from falling captive to Amasis' agents in Lydia. A better-equipped adviser Cambyses could not

have desired. Phanes had commanded the mercenaries of Egypt, had been in Amasis' confidence and was intimately acquainted with the defences of Egypt. He derided the difficulties of the passage of the desert; he suggested that local Bedouin could arrange a water-supply train; he spoke contemptuously of Amasis as a king incapacitated by age and dissipation, and of Egypt as a land inhabited by an unwarlike race, dependent for defence upon mercenaries.

Three generations of unbroken peace had given the Egyptian people a comfortable but unwarranted sense of security, and a rumoured concentration of Persian troops at Gaza in the spring of 525 B.C. did not disturb them. That sense of security was shattered by news of the presence of the enemy's advance parties in Sinai, and uneasiness deepened into anxiety when the frontier guards, in place of expelling the intruders, stayed supinely in their lines. They would hardly have been in a condition to undertake an offensive. Prolonged inaction had ruined their spirit and discipline, and unmindful of history, their commanders had come to regard the desert as an impassable obstacle to the advance of an intruder. Thus patrolling, that elementary duty of all frontier service in peace and war, had been neglected, and Cambyses' negotiations with the Bedouin unobserved. As the enemy drew near to Pelusium, anxiety gave place to panic. Cities bordering the frontier emptied themselves of their civilian population: men, women and children hurried to Memphis and Sais in the expectation of finding an asylum.

Amasis had died a month or two earlier and the task of defending the kingdom had devolved upon the shoulders of Psammetichus III. A middle-aged prince kept by his father in ignorance of the art of government, Psammetichus was poorly prepared for the responsibility. It was an instance familiar enough to students of history, of a ruler hampered by age and infirmity from fulfilling his duties, yet unwilling to relinquish to his heir any share of the royal authority. Preceding Kings of Egypt, foreseeing the need of educating their successors, had created them co-regents, or confided to their hands some honourable office of state: but the practice had fallen into disuse, and Amasis did not restore it. Thus Psammetichus came to the throne without experience of administration or of war and at an hour when Egypt was in dire need of a ruler who was master of both.

Phanes had been right when he declared that one weakness of Egypt lay in the age and infirmity of the sovereign.

None the less, Psammetichus at this critical point of his kingdom's history showed considerable spirit. He evacuated the standing camps of mercenaries, stripped the palace of its guards and the fleet of its marines and hastened himself to the front to select the battle-ground. The line chosen was well adapted for defence: protected on the left flank by swamp and marsh, on the right by Necho's trench and in the rear by the fortress of Daphnae. But this was the only advantage Psammetichus could claim: in experience and in mobility the enemy was immeasurably superior. The commanders and many of the rank and file were veterans of the Lydian and Babylonian campaigns, whereas the Egyptian army was wholly untried in war. The Persian infantry were also more mobile: manoeuvring at long range had been abandoned in favour of fighting at close quarters, and the soldier had learnt that the offensive is the shortest way to victory.

A tragic and savage incident preceded the actual battle. Cambyzes stepped in front of the Persian line the better to mark the enemy's dispositions, and at his side walked the deserter Phanes. A roar of imprecation and insult from the Egyptian mercenaries followed recognition of the renegade, and dragging to the front his two sons, his former comrades called upon the father to stand and witness a vicarious expiation of his crime. 'After which,' reports Herodotus, the executioners 'brought out a bowl and setting it in the space between the two hosts, they led the victims one by one to the vessel, and slew them over it.' Then water and wine were added to the blood, and the bowl was passed down the ranks for each soldier to sip in turn. A moment later Cambyzes gave the signal to engage, and his impatient troops rushed upon the enemy. The struggle continued without intermission from sunrise to sundown: fought on both sides with equal spirit as the number of the slain testified. But the Persian would not be denied. One assault followed another, and towards evening the exhausted Egyptian wings faltered and broke. It was the end. In the press the king was carried away and the Greeks, seeing themselves in peril of being surrounded, ceased to resist. Thus a single battle was sufficient to decide the campaign.

CHAPTER IX

THE TWENTY-SIXTH (*continued*) AND THE TWENTY-SEVENTH OR PERSIAN DYNASTIES

Cambyses	525-522 B.C.
Darius I	522-485 B.C.
Xerxes I	485-464 B.C.
Artaxerxes I	464-424 B.C.
Darius II	424-404 B.C.

THE Persians did not pursue: exhausted by forced marches made on empty stomachs, the troops lay down on the field of battle, while Cambyses impatiently awaited news of the enemy's disposition. Reports from spies and agents quickly removed any apprehension of further resistance: Psammetichus had not paused till he was within the walls of Memphis; his army, apart from the Greek mercenaries, had degenerated into a leaderless rabble, incapable of reforming their ranks. Encouraged by the information, Cambyses remained at Pelusium, requisitioned a Mytilenean galley reported to be a fast sailer and, putting on board a herald, bade the master sail to Memphis. News of the galley's departure escaped: its progress up the river was signalled from village to village, and Memphis prepared a savage reception for the Persian passenger. Hoisting a flag of truce, the galley entered the port unsuspecting of danger. The master was quickly undeceived. Once the ship had tied up to the bank, a company of soldiers clambered on deck, slew the herald and the crew and bore their mangled corpses in triumph through the city. It was a crime that leaves a stain upon Egyptian honour: the credentials of the herald should have provided him with a passport to the king's presence; the flag of truce should have furnished a safe conduct for his company. It was also a commentary upon Egyptian good sense. Memphis could not hope to escape punishment: but crowded with refugees and garrisoned by troops who had already tasted the bitterness of defeat, it was in no condition to resist assault. Nor, despite the spirit of the inhabitants, did the fortress do so. The defences, like those of Daphnae, were crumbling for lack of

repair, the perimeter of the wall was too extensive for the garrison to man, the belief that the Nile afforded protection against an enemy advancing from the east was illusory.

Cambyes set out at once to exact retribution. It was easy marching compared with the traverse of Sinai. The season was the late spring, the Nile low and fordable, food abundant, and, refreshed by the halt at Pelusium, the Persian army took the road to Memphis in high spirits. The troops crossed the river at the apex of the Delta, and continuing the advance on the left bank, took the fortress by surprise. The garrison presumably had not expected assault in that quarter or, following tradition, Psammetichus, when the defence gave way, would have slipped off to the south. As it was, he seems to have surrendered at the discretion of the conqueror, and his guards to have laid down their arms without asking for terms. The king's punishment Cambyes reserved for his private decision: that of the Egyptian courtiers and commanders whom he held responsible for the deaths of his herald and the crew he entrusted to a commission of Persian judges. Their deliberation was short, their judgement drastic. For every seaman so treacherously slain ten noble Egyptians must forfeit life, ran the sentence, and Memphis wept bitter tears to hear it. Meanwhile, seated on a mock throne on the outskirts of the city, Psammetichus was enduring a painful experience. Past him there filed a long procession of young men and women, victims of Cambyes' retribution. First marched his own daughter leading a company of high-born maidens, dressed as slaves and bearing on their heads water-jars as symbols of servitude; next came Psammetichus' son and 2,000 youthful Egyptian nobles, roped and bridled, on their way to the executioner. It was a sad day for the unhappy parents of these boys and girls, and only Psammetichus had fortitude enough to keep back his tears. He had bent his head as his two children passed: he gave no sign of being moved till an aged courtier, reduced to beggary, implored alms of the Persian guards. Then the king's composure vanished: he burst into tears, accusing himself of being the author of the misfortunes that had befallen his old companion.

Unable to understand how a king could countenance the shame of his own children and yet grieve for the misfortunes of a beggar, the puzzled Cambyes questioned Psammetichus on the point.

The answer saved, perhaps, his life. 'Son of Cyrus,' said Psammetichus, 'my own misfortunes were too great for tears, but when a man falls from opulence to beggary at the threshold of old age, one may well weep for him.' The excuse moved Cambyses. He released his prisoner from arrest, he lodged him handsomely and paid him the respect due to his rank. Policy perhaps as much as compassion was responsible for Cambyses' change of heart. It had never been his father's practice to treat a fallen king inhumanly, or the inhabitants of a conquered territory barbarously: rather he endeavoured to ameliorate the former lot of the second, and to extend a hand of friendship to the first. To Babylon he had given a generous measure of autonomy, for Croesus of Lydia he conceived an abiding affection. Croesus repaid the debt by becoming the guardian of the son, on his accession, by guiding the ward through the pitfalls that strewed the path of an unexperienced sovereign. He accompanied Cambyses to Egypt, and was with him in Memphis. Thus acquainted with Cyrus' procedure, he perhaps counselled Cambyses to make Psammetichus a tributary prince and Egypt a vassal state of the Persian empire. Cyrus had found the practice to answer in territory too distant from his capital to govern directly, and could Psammetichus have refrained from 'intermeddling with affairs, he might have rescued Egypt, and ruled it as a governor'.¹ But Psammetichus had little sense, and had at his elbow no shrewd and kindly Croesus to advise him. Once he had recovered his liberty he plotted revolt, and losing patience, Cambyses made an end of him.

Though the summary execution of Psammetichus checked conspiracy locally, the existence of strong anti-Persian feeling elsewhere boded ill for Croesus' conception of Egypt as a loyal vassal kingdom of the empire. South of Memphis, the Egyptian people, undeterred by the enemy's occupation of the city, refused to acknowledge Persian sovereignty, and rumour whispered that Ethiopia was coming to their rescue. But gossip had never stopped a King of Persia from waging war, and only uncertainty of the intentions of Libya and Cyrenaica caused him to delay undertaking the campaign. The arrival of embassies soliciting alliance and offering to pay tribute in return, ended his perplexity. Their anxiety to obtain Persia's goodwill was easy to understand:

¹ *Herodotus* III, 15.

the Libyans were afraid of the Cyrenaicans, the latter terrified of Carthage, their neighbour on the west. Persian knowledge of Northern Africa was elementary, and likely enough the existence of a flourishing Phoenician colony was unknown to them, but their curiosity was excited, and the Cyrenaicans were very ready for their own purpose to gratify it. They told a plausible story. Carthage, whose foundation classical tradition ascribes to Tyre, already supreme through a formidable navy in the Mediterranean, was now contemplating a land empire that would embrace Cyrenaica, Libya and by inference Egypt. The hint was enough for Cambyses. His fleet still lay idle in Pelusium, and to its admiral he sent orders to equip a squadron, man it with his seamen and sail to frighten Carthage into submission. But the command miscarried. The best crews were Phoenicians, and when the men learnt of their destination they refused to fight against their own countrymen. It was as well: the Carthaginian navy would probably have made short work of the Persian squadron.

Always in territory occupied by an enemy are men ready to pay court to the conqueror: some thinking thereby to benefit their own fortune, others inspired by a worthier impulse. Of the notables who hurried to Memphis, a certain Udjahorresneit,¹ a native of Sais, treasurer of the household, controller of the trading fleet in the Red Sea and a connection of the royal family, could claim to belong to the second category. A devoted worshipper of Neit, he had long been ashamed of the defilement and impiety that existed in the great temple. Amasis' interest in the shrine expired early in his reign: having raised a monument or two in honour of the goddess and built a sepulchre for his body after death, he thought he had done enough, and in the last years of his life, being in want of money, he had repaid himself for the pains by appropriating to his own use Neith's revenue. Nor was this the only indignity to Neith that saddened the pious Udjahorresneit. The precincts of the temple had become a common lodging house for the inhabitants of Sais too poor or too lazy to find accommodation elsewhere. It was in the hope of purifying the house of Neith that Udjahorresneit persuaded Cambyses to visit Sais. The invitation came at an opportune moment. Mem-

¹ An inscribed statue of green basalt in the Vatican presents Udjahorresneit embracing a shrine containing the mummy of Osiris.

phus was still grieving over the slaughter of its sons and daughters, and Cambyses was glad to escape from sullen faces and muttered curses. He had hoped, perhaps, to soften prejudice by professing respect for Ptah as his father had done for Marduk, the god of Babylon. But the priesthood was no less bitter than the laity of Memphis, and Udjahorresnet promised better fortune in Sais. The undertaking was honourably fulfilled. From his host, Cambyses learnt of the majestic antiquity of Neith, from the hands of the priesthood he received the ancient title *Samtowë* or 'Uniter of the Two Lands', and in return he ordered the expulsion of all strangers from the precincts of the temple and restored to the priesthood the appropriated revenues. Likely enough, Cambyses' visit coincided with the annual celebration of the Feast of Lanterns, when the multitude of improvised lamps so illuminated the darkness that night was hardly distinguishable from day. Less probable is Herodotus' story of the desecration of Amasis' remains. The body was torn from the grave, the Persian guards were ordered to dismember it. But the embalmers had done their work too well, and the impatient Cambyses burnt the remains. Indirectly, the story corroborates Egyptian and Persian tradition that Cambyses bore a grudge against Amasis. According to this tradition, reports of the beauty of Amasis' daughter so inflamed the youthful Cambyses' imagination that he requested her hand. But uncertain whether the offer signified marriage or concubinage, Amasis sent in place a daughter of Apries. The trick was discovered and Cambyses vowed to be revenged upon its author.

He hurried back to Memphis to receive the reply to a message addressed to Nastasen, the sovereign of Ethiopia, assuring him of Persian friendship. Elsewhere a herald would have been charged with the mission: but experience had shown that the valley of the Nile honoured none of the observances of war, and Cambyses was disinclined to hazard the life of a second Persian noble. In place he had procured from Aswân certain tribal chiefs acquainted with the Ethiopian tongue, inhabitants of the land of the cataracts, known to the Greeks as *Ichthyophagi*, or fish-eaters, and had charged them with the double task of delivering a message to Nastasen and of ascertaining his intentions. It was a discouraging story. 'Ye are come,' said the astute Nastasen, 'to search out my kingdom. Your king is not a just man, he has coveted a land

not his own and enslaved a people who did him no wrong.' Thus speaking he called for a bow, and bending it cried: 'When the Persians can pull a bow of this strength, let them come against Ethiopia: till then, let them thank the gods that they have not put it into the hearts of the sons of the Ethiopians to court countries which do not belong to them'. His reception of the presents Cambyzes had sent as earnest of his good faith was equally unpromising. He threw aside a handsome purple cloak, curtly remarking 'that men were deceitful and their garments also': he was no kinder concerning necklaces and bracelets of solid gold, declaring that the Ethiopians had stronger fetters.

Cambyzes wasted no more time or words, but set out at once for Ethiopia. The Thebaid was traversed without incident: its people offered no opposition, thus demonstrating that earlier reports of the existence of conspiracy were unfounded. Dropping at Thebes troops to form a desert corps, Cambyzes pushed on with the main body. He was soon in the land of the cataracts, a forbidding terrain that offered little sustenance to man and beast. It was an ill-starred adventure, ignorantly undertaken and inadequately equipped. No use was made of the river: the supply of the army was carried by pack transport. Food soon ran short, and before the second cataract was reached hunger overtook the army. Slaughter of the baggage animals gave some relief, but the alleviation was temporary only, and a more sagacious commander would have abandoned the campaign at this point. But the obstinate Cambyzes would not do so, and his men supported themselves as best they could on roots and herbs. Presently there came a day when they resorted to cannibalism, and groups of ten men cast lots for one to die in order that his comrades could live. Then and only then did Cambyzes call a halt and retrace his steps to Thebes.

The fate of the desert corps was more tragic since no member of it returned to tell the tale. A certain mystery encompasses the beginning and end of the expedition. According to Herodotus its destination was Siwah, its objective the destruction of the oracle of Amūn. Neither statement carries conviction. The oasis was of no military importance, and Memphis would have been a more convenient point of departure than Thebes: nor at this period was the oracle of Siwah sufficiently frequented by pilgrims to justify its destruction. According to the same authority, the

corps consisted of 50,000 men: a number wholly disproportionate to the resistance that might be expected. It is possible that Siwah was only a blind to cover the occupation of Cyrenaica, and later the capture of Carthage: it is possible also that tradition grossly exaggerated the size of the force, and that its objective was no more ambitious than the occupation of the western oasis. The last hypothesis might account for the loss of the expedition through the agency of a sandstorm. Such storms are terrific in their intensity. The disappearance of the sun into a gloomy sky presages their coming: an impalpable dust fills the air, blinding and choking man and beast. There is no use going forward or backward in these conditions. Dawn may bring relief, and man and beast may purpose to continue his march. It is not so easy. The sand has obliterated the track, formed new dunes and demolished old ones, and at a loss for landmarks the guide cannot retrieve his bearings. More than one party in historical time has perished miserably in the Sahara, and such, no doubt, was the end of Cambyse's troops. Privation and disappointment had left their mark upon Cambyse: the wilfulness that distinguished him from childhood had developed into a sadistic iconoclasm that boded ill for the victims. Thebes was the first to feel the change. Six generations had passed since Ashurbanipal had sacked the city, and it might be thought that little worth taking remained. But the kingdom of Amen-Ré¹ was rich enough to support a second experience, and Cambyse, if Diodorus is credited (l. 46), found sufficient to reward his pains. He went to work more methodically than his Assyrian predecessor: overturning chapels and shrines, robbing the tombs of dead kings and mutilating monuments too substantial to destroy or remove, carrying off to Babylon statues that captivated his fancy.¹ If the patronage of Neith, the acceptance of the title of Samtowé, 'Uniter of the Two Lands,' and the adoption of a cartouche were intended to signify respect for Egyptian religion and custom, his behaviour at Memphis gave the lie to any such belief. Memphis, on his arrival, was celebrating the discovery of a new Apis, a coal-black bull, but for one white patch on the forehead and a second on the back that suggested the form of an eagle. Mistaking the merriment as a sign of joy at his misfortunes, Cambyse

¹ Nominated satrap of Egypt on the death of Alexander the Great, Ptolemy took back with him many of these trophies; see the author's *The Ptolemies of Egypt*, pp. 4, 7.

angrily asked why should Memphis sing and dance when noble Persians lay dead in the sands of Ethiopia. The leaders humbly answered that the people intended no offence, that the occasion was one when from time immemorial Egypt feasted and made holiday. The apology served the speakers ill: apostrophizing them as liars, he ordered their execution. He was no more fortunate when questioning the priests. They answered with like words, and Cambyses, swearing that he would soon know whether a tame god had appeared in Egypt, commanded the Apis bull to be brought into his presence. He stared at the beast for a while, and then drawing his dagger, aimed a blow at its belly. The thrust missed: either Cambyses' hand was unsteady, or the bull moved at the last moment. Wounded in the thigh, the Apis staggered back to its stable and Cambyses laughed at the horrified priests. They were not to escape so lightly. Addressing them, he called out: 'A fit god indeed for Egyptians, but it shall cost you dear to make of me a laughing stock'. He was as good as his word: he scourged the priests, he proclaimed the feast illegal.¹ Later he is said to have pillaged the cemeteries of Memphis, to have ridiculed the god Ptah and broken the statues of the Kabiri, the deities of the Phoenician settlement.

Conspiracy at home ended his stay in Egypt abruptly: Gaumata,² a Magian priest posing as Smerdis, the dead brother of the king, seizing the throne, proclaimed that only his commands were lawful. Close similarity in feature and figure aided the imposture, and the assassination of the late Smerdis' intimates lessened the chances of exposure. By remitting all taxes and suspending conscription for three years Gaumata consolidated his pretensions and Cambyses' cause was lost before he had left Egypt. The defection of Syria was the final misfortune: defeated in the field and deserted by his friends he died by his own hand in 521 B.C.³ But Gaumata lived only a few months to enjoy his triumph. Counter-conspiracy followed; a handful of nobles, suspicious of Gaumata's identity, trapped and slew the usurper in Media. Their leader was Darius, a descendant of the younger branch of the Achaemenes, the forefathers of Cyrus, a talented

¹ Study of the stela that records the death of this Apis led Brugisch to discredit Herodotus' story. His arguments are not wholly convincing.

² Darius. Behistun Inscription.

³ *Strabo* XVIII, 1-3, says that Cambyses penetrated as far as Asia Minor. The story is improbable. His envoys no doubt delivered their message there, but records never gave evidence.

and ambitious prince, who at once claimed the throne. His accession was fiercely disputed. Civil war broke out, and for a while it seemed as if the Persian empire would founder. Susiana and Babylon were the first to fly the standard of revolt: Media, Assyria and Egypt, and even Persia, followed the example. Even in Persia, Darius was to encounter the opposition of a second pretender, styling himself Smerdis, son of Cyrus, who won the ear of the people. Nineteen pitched battles had to be fought, nine kings to become prisoners of war, before Darius could establish his sovereignty or restore peace within the empire. The triumph did not unduly clate this pious and moderate prince: he ascribed success of his arms to Ormazd, the god of his forefathers; he acknowledged on the Behistun rock the service of six of his generals.

The administration of the empire was his next task. Upon the foundation laid by Cyrus he set a superstructure that Alexander the Great modified but did not materially change. He reduced to more manageable limits some of Cyrus' satrapies, he fixed their tribute according to their taxable capacity, he introduced the gold daric as the imperial coinage, he made communication between the central government and provincial governments by road and post, he developed commerce with the Far East. Nor did he stop at the issue of decrees: by frequent inspections he saw to their execution, and in this wise he came to Egypt in 517 B.C.

It was not his first acquaintance with the country. He had made the campaign with Cambyses, had marked the agricultural and commercial wealth of the people and judged them easy to govern. But a survey of the satrapy left him now perplexed and dissatisfied. The administration was in confusion: injustices were rampant. Aryandes, charged by Cambyses on his departure with its government, had committed two heinous offences: he had struck a silver coinage in rivalry of Darius' golden daric, he had waged war upon a neighbouring tributary to suit his own purpose. Cyrene was the victim. Feud, always endemic behind the walls of the city, had blazed into insurrection when Battus, a grandson of the Battus, ally and friend of Amasis, succeeded to the throne. It was an unpromising inheritance. The father had suffered severe reverse at the hands of Libyan tribesmen, and the existence of the colony was at stake. Depressed by the knowledge, the Cyrenaicans summoned Demonax, the law-giver of

Mantusia in Arcadia, to examine their form of government. No commission could have been more to the taste of this Arcadian philosopher, a devoted believer in the virtue of Isonomia or equality of civil and political rights. To him sovereignty was anathema and he recommended the transfer of the royal prerogatives to the people, reserving to the throne only certain religious privileges. But the new king was in no mind to accept the award: he sent Pheretina, his mother, to beg help from Salamis or Cyprus, while he himself sailed for Samos on a similar errand. Wearied by her assiduous persistence, the ruler of Salamis presented her with a gold distaff and spindle, saying: 'These are the gifts I offer to women'. The son was more fortunate. In Samos he recruited an army, and returning to Cyrene, re-established his authority. But only temporarily: his reprisals were followed by counter-reprisals, and in fear of his life Battus fled to Barce. It was no safe refuge: his enemies slew him as he walked in the market-place.

The news sent Pheretina hurrying to Egypt: crying that her son's death came from his loyalty to the Persian cause, she implored Aryandes to punish the assassins. The latter lent a ready ear to the request. To wage war upon a tributary state was outside a satrap's authority, but the temptation in this instance was too strong to resist. He anticipated, no doubt, a handsome reward from Pheretina for his success, and intended to placate Darius by the annexation of Libya and Cyrenaica. But the campaign produced no greater result than the capture of Barce by stratagem. Amasis, the Persian commander, invested the city and called upon the people to surrender the slayers of Battus. Their answer was defiant, and the siege began. It did not prosper. Nine months passed in assault and sortie, in mining and counter-mining. Persian casualties were heavy and, despairing of taking the city by storm, Amasis resorted to stratagem. He opened communication with the besieged, he proposed reasonable terms and, deceived by the offer, Barce opened its gates. Thus a trick achieved what Persian valour could not accomplish. But that was the limit of the expedition's success. Sullen and hostile, Cyrene refused to receive Pheretina or provide Amasis with supplies, and Libya, suspicious of Persian intentions, harried and retarded the retiring columns.

The failure sealed Aryandes' fate. Darius might have pardoned

the minting of Egyptian currency, but could not forgive a satrap guilty of provoking a military disaster. Egypt breathed more freely at the news of Aryandes' death. His satrapy had been a painful experience. The Egyptian people had tolerated Cambyzes' exactions, borne with his sacrileges, but on his departure and the transition from conquest to occupation they had hoped for some relief. None had been forthcoming, and Egypt stirred uneasily. Such was the misery that discontent might have flared into violence had a noble come forward to speak in the name of his countrymen. None was forthcoming, the royal line was extinct and the monuments of the period record the name of no high priest or prince bold enough to oppose Aryandes. Pious Udjahorresneit of Sais had found favour with Cambyzes, and had succeeded in preserving the temple of Neith from desecration. But the interest of this pious man stopped at the achievement, and the inscriptions on his statue give no hint of the sufferings of Egypt under Persian rule. First and foremost, perhaps, was the subject of tribute. Cambyzes levied it arbitrarily, his lieutenants followed the example, sending as little as they dared to the royal treasury, retaining for themselves the balance, and Aryandes, finding the practice to his taste, did not alter it. It is likely enough that he took advantage of the outbreak of revolt that marked the first years of the new reign in Babylon, Media, Armenia and elsewhere in Asia Minor to cease payments to the imperial exchequer, and that the omission hastened Darius' visit to Egypt. The haphazard collection of tribute now ceased: in place of levies locally and unequally imposed, Egypt contributed in future the sum of 700 Babylonian talents of silver in addition to the proceeds of the fisheries of Lake Moeris and the provision of wheat to the imperial army of occupation. With the exception of Babylon, it was the heaviest tribute paid by any one of the twenty satrapies, but Darius was confident that Egypt could carry the burden.

Apart from an impression of wealth, Darius from his first visit had been convinced that Cambyzes' public contempt for Egyptian religious beliefs was unpolitic since it antagonized the priesthood and embittered the laity. Though a devoted worshipper of Ahura Mazda, the beneficent spirit of the Zoroastrian doctrine, he tolerated within the empire the existence of all national gods, and it was in his mind to obliterate in Egypt memories of

Cambyzes' iconoclasm. A happy coincidence, if legend is credited, presented him with an opportunity of showing his respect for Egyptian divinities. The city was in mourning: Apis was dead, a successor had not been found. The discovery of a bull with the traditional markings was not, indeed, an easy task. The scrutiny was severe, and the interval between the death of one Apis and the intromission of a successor often prolonged. Such was the predicament of Memphis at the moment of Darius' entry, and his generous offer of a hundred talents to the finder of an animal that fulfilled conditions established his reputation throughout Egypt as a king of piety and understanding. His behaviour to the priesthood was particularly circumspect. Having restored the house of Ptah, he thought himself entitled to set up in the temple porch his own statue. Unfortunately, this was already occupied by the giant effigies of Ramesses II, and when the high priest hinted that this Egyptian king had administered an empire as great as that of Darius, the latter good-humouredly admitted the logic of the answer and said no more. Greek authority is responsible for these two incidents, and both may be legendary, though either would be consonant with the reputation that Darius enjoyed in Egypt. A more substantial sign of his sympathy with Egyptian susceptibility lies in his erection of a temple that Khnumibre',¹ architect of Upper and Lower Egypt, raised at the oasis now called El-Khargah. Five days distant from Thebes and visited by a few pilgrims, Khargah was a strange locality to select for the purpose. Its wall inscriptions give no hint of the reasons that inspired Darius' choice of the site. None the less, the main inscription, a type of pantheistic hymn, is interesting, as it proclaims Darius [Ntariush] to be the son of Rē', the beloved of Amūn, son of Horus, son of Isis and Osiris, the ever living'.² Nothing could demonstrate more forcibly than this divine genealogy Darius' desire to win the goodwill of the Egyptian people.

The most likely explanation is that Darius had no desire to magnify one Egyptian deity or locality at the expense of another. Understanding the importance of the sun in the national doctrine, he made it the central figure of this pantheistic hymn, and called

¹ See Brugsch, H., *A History of Egypt under the Pharaohs*, vol. II, p. 308, for the pedigree for twenty-three generations of this architect up to Imhotep, architect to King Djoser III's dynasty.

² *Records of the Past*, vol. VIII, p. 144.

upon the lesser gods to acknowledge Rē's supremacy. Thus he pictured Rē as blessing Sais, Lycopolis 'despite the tens of thousands and thousands of gods which come out of it', Busiris, Buto, Memphis, Heliopolis, Uas (Thebes) and so on. Such is the purport of the inscription on the temple of Hibis in Khargah that proclaims Darius (Ntaruish) son of the Sun. Not content with this work of piety, he restored at Sais the temple of Neith and raised in Edfu a sanctuary to Horus: simultaneously, he promulgated a new code of law, repaired the river dam at Memphis and began the construction of a canal to unite the waters of the Red and Mediterranean Seas.¹ But the excavation was never completed. Reports that the Red Sea level was higher than that of the Mediterranean stopped the work, and Darius was content to inform posterity of his intentions. 'I am a Persian,' says one of his many stele. 'I conquered Egypt, and ordered this canal to be dug. Then I cried: "Go, destroy half of it, for such was my will".' But his mind was busy with greater matters than the welfare of Egypt, and meditating on the punishment of insolent Greece, he hurried off to administer it. But the vanity of Aryandes, the dead satrap, had provided a moral, and taking to heart the lesson, Darius left Egypt to the care of Amasis, an Egyptian. It was a shrewd choice; the loyal Amasis and his son Nephra held a just balance between the prerogatives of Darius and the rights of his subjects. None the less, Egypt smarted under the indignity of paying tribute, and raised the standard of revolt. Darius did not live to crush it, and the task devolved in 484 B.C. upon Xerxes, the Ahasuerus of the Old Testament.

He was a striking contrast to his predecessors: a capricious and inconstant prince, a superstitious and licentious Persian. Pre-occupied with Greece, Xerxes commissioned his brother Achaemenes to bring the refractory satrapy of Egypt to its senses. It was a task after Achaemenes' heart: he took from the temples what treasure Cambyses had spared, and dispatched to Xerxes every Egyptian sailor and soldier he could lay hands on. They were a welcome reinforcement to the Persian forces campaigning in Greece: in particular a hundred triremes manned by crews that could both sail and fight a ship. Off Salamis the Egyptian sailor acquitted himself with credit; at Plataea the Egyptian soldier had the post of honour, the right wing.

¹ In the Cairo Museum is a stela referring to Darius' construction of this canal.

Xerxes did not himself visit Egypt: none the less, he borrowed the throne names of the Pharaohs. A younger son, Artaxerxes, surnamed Longimanus, his right arm being longer than his left, succeeded in 464 B.C. to an empire exhausted by war, distracted by insurrection. East and west of the Euphrates the empire was in rebellion, and distant Egypt caught the infection. Achaemenes, still satrap with a reduced garrison, found himself beleaguered in Memphis: Inarus, a dynast of Libyan ancestry from Mareotis, was calling upon the Egyptian people to rise against the tyrant. Vast numbers flocked to his standard, and proclaiming himself to be a legitimate Pharaoh, son of Rē' and vice-regent of Rē' on earth, Inarus was presently in undisputed possession of the Delta. That achievement stung the indolent Achaemenes into action. Sallying out of Memphis, he joined battle with Inarus at Papremis in the north of the Delta. Neither side could claim the victory, but Achaemenes retired on Memphis, and Inarus appealed to Athens.

Athens in the year 458 B.C. was in a state of intense excitement. Aided by part of her fleet, she had won notable victories at Cecyphalac and at Megara over the Peloponnesians, yet this was not enough to achieve the supremacy she was struggling for, as she needed territory and foreign commerce. Hoping to secure control of trade with the Nile and to outstrip the rival merchant cities of Hellas in the race, she desired to establish a naval station on the coast of Egypt. Thus she was ready enough to take an active part in the struggle between Egypt and the Great King. To Inarus' plea for support she responded with a fleet of 200 Athenian and allied galleys which had been operating off Cyprus against Persia. Overwhelming the enemy guardships, they entered the Nile, and sailing on to Memphis, the squadron landed troops and carried the suburbs of the capital. But that was the end of the Athenian triumph: Achaemenes withstood assault upon the citadel, and neither Inarus nor any of the civilian population lent any support to the Greeks. More ominous still was the arrival of a Persian relief force under Megabysos, and, outnumbered and overwhelmed, the Athenian commander decided to withdraw to Prosopitis, an island twenty miles north of Memphis. There he defended himself for eighteen months, until Megabysos burnt the Greek ships, broke through the defences and took prisoner the survivors of the siege at Byblus whither

they had retreated. To add to the loss, a fleet of fifty triremes sent in relief from Athens was destroyed in the Mendesian mouth of the Nile. Thus Athens lost not only ships but also the immediate hope of controlling Egypt. Her only reward was that the disaster supported her removal of the confederate treasure from Delos to Athens, where it was less exposed to Persian designs on it; thereby she increased her own predominance.

Inarus was caught and crucified and the victor anticipated no more trouble. He was disappointed: Amyrtaeus, a lieutenant of Inarus, slipped out of the Persian reach and appealed to Athens. Athens responded reluctantly, but at this point history becomes obscure. None the less, the fact that Amyrtaeus repaired various temples at Thebes and at Khargah suggests that he was master of most of Egypt. At all events, Artaxerxes recalled Megabysos and nominated various Egyptians to fill the post of satrap and subordinate offices on the promise of observing all the royal rights. Thus it came about that the sons of Inarus and Amyrtaeus took employment under the Great King and that the more curious Greek seized the occasion to explore Egypt. Among the visitors were Hellanicus a diarist, Anaxagoras the physicist, tutor of Pericles, and finally Herodotus, justly known as the 'Father of History'. Nothing escaped the notice of this observant man, nothing was too insignificant for him to record. He went everywhere, he saw everything, he conversed with everybody. At Sais he witnessed the mysterious Feast of Lamps, at Bubastis he watched the ceremony of the Feast of Isis, and then the festival of lioness-headed Bast, a solar goddess; at Papremis he saw the struggle of rival priests and their congregations for possession of the image of the city god.

Battle, murder and sudden death marked the accession of Darius the second, surnamed the Bastard. Brother slew brother, and the survivor consummated the tale of crime by assassinating the vizier who had helped him to the throne. In the struggle Egypt took no share. Vicissitude had broken her spirit and robbed her of all but instinct of self-preservation. Darius' reign was a mournful chapter of Egyptian history; a fanatical fire-worshipper, he was bent on forcing his faith upon the empire. Egypt did not respond. Neither persecutions nor arguments could expel belief that life after death depended on the resurrection of the body, or that the soul deprived of its mortal covering would perish also. Her

people listened with closed ears to the scornful exhortations of Otanes the satrap, watched with unseeing eyes the worship of Ptah conducted according to Persian ritual. They were dark days for Egypt. Then in 404 B.C. a second Artaxerxes ascended the throne, and Egypt dutifully accepted the accession. Elsewhere his title was challenged; a younger brother, satrap of Lydia, marched to Babylon. The rebel fell on the field of battle at Cunaxa in 401 B.C., and his 10,000 Greeks began under Xenophon their immortal retreat. But the apogee of the Persian empire was approaching; and in the confusion Egypt succeeded in regaining her independence under Amyrtaius, the chief of the National party. It was the end of the Twenty-seventh or Persian Dynasty; a gloomy chapter of history that left no mark on Egypt.

CHAPTER X

THE TWENTY-EIGHTH TO THE THIRTY-FIRST DYNASTIES

THE TWENTY-EIGHTH DYNASTY

Amyrtaius	404-398 B.C.
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THE TWENTY-NINTH DYNASTY

Neferites I (Nef'arud)	398-392 B.C.
Acoris (Hakor)	392-380 B.C.
Psamouthis (Psimut)	380-379 B.C.
Neferites II	379-378 B.C.

THE THIRTIETH DYNASTY

Nectanebo I (Nekhnebef)	378-361 B.C.
Teos (Djeher)	361-359 B.C.
Nectanebo II (Nekhtharhab)	359-341 B.C.

THE THIRTY-FIRST DYNASTY

Artaxerxes III Ochus	341-338 B.C.
Arses	338-335 B.C.
Darius III Codomanius	335-330 B.C.

THE will of Persia to dominate Egypt remained unchanged. Though Amyrtaius recognized the overlordship of the Persians during his reign of six years (404-398 B.C.), his four successors of the Mendesian Dynasty were less submissive: throughout their reigns, which lasted for twenty years, the struggle against Persia continued. In the year 398 Nephertites, a Mendesian soldier-chieftain, had raised an army to overcome Amyrtaius. His success brought him the crown two years later: Amyrtaius, leaving little trace of his reign, was killed. It was a period when Sparta was at war with Persia; Sparta needed not only munitions but money. Her population was diminished by constant war and the hire of mercenaries was expensive. Nephertites saw in alliance with Sparta his opportunity to assume the offensive against the old aggressor of Egypt: to cement the bargain he dispatched a fleet of 100 ships laden with 800,000 bushels of wheat and with munitions of war to King Agesilaus' aid. Waylaid at Rhodes by the Athenian Admiral Conon, in command of the Persian fleet,

unhappily, the convoy failed to arrive: nevertheless, the mutual pact held. During the struggle ensuing between Sparta and Persia in the Asiatic provinces, the Egyptian land forces advanced to the Syrian frontiers, where they halted and assumed defensive positions. Agesilaus with his Spartan troops was repulsed by the satrap Pharnabazos and retreated to Ephesus to winter.

Nepherites took no further part in hostilities, but now turned to the affairs of Egypt during the few years he continued to reign. His name figures on a few monuments, so it is to be supposed that he, like his forerunners, held the gods in respect. His successor, Acoris, the second king of the Mendesian Dynasty, allied himself with Athens four years after his accession (392 B.C.), and also joined Evagoras of Cyprus, the Lybians and Pisidians in resisting Persia. In this stand he was supported by the prolonged revolt of Cyprus, where Evagoras had defended his kingdom for no less than ten years. During this period Egypt not only had ample time to consolidate her forces and to engage an army of Greek mercenaries under Greek commanders, but Acoris was able to send to Evagoras fifty ships-of-war and a large supply of corn and money. His relations with Evagoras were such that the latter sailed to consult him and to beg, though vainly, for further help when the long struggle at length failed. The commander of the Persian fleet, Gaius, also deserted and allied himself with Acoris. Keeping the war at a distance with the help of foreign mercenaries for a further two years, the Egyptian king cultivated the arts of peace at home. At Medīnet Habu, and at El-Kāb and at Karnak, where he undertook restorations on a large scale, traces of his reign of twelve years are to be found. At Karnak a block shows King Psamouthis adoring the barque of Amūn. As the god's reply includes King Acoris, it is to be presumed that Psamouthis' short reign (380-379) succeeded that of Acoris. Further knowledge of Psamouthis is wanting, but the last years of King Acoris were troubled by revolt; presumably this had not been settled in the days of Psamouthis, for Nepherites II, his successor, was after only a few months' reign overthrown by a prince of Sebennytyus, Nectanebo I (Nekhtnebef).

This king of the Thirtieth or Sebennytyc Dynasty assumed the power at a moment when the peace of Antalcidas concluded between Evagoras and Pharnabazos once more laid open Egypt to a concentrated attack from Persia with a formidable army of

20,000 Greek and 200,000 Barbarians. To meet this, Nectanebo relied on the troops, both native and mercenary, prepared by his predecessor Acoris. They were a powerful army under the command of the Athenian Admiral Chabrias, who impulsively placed himself and his fleet at the disposal of Persia's enemy. Athens, disapproving of this impolitic move, recalled Chabrias, and evened the account by dispatching Iphicrates, her most renowned general, to support Pharnabazos. This was at first disastrous to the Egyptian army, and Pelusium was endangered. However, Nectanebo strengthened the fortresses at the mouths of the Nile, filling up many of the channels by mounds of earth, and digging trenches from the Lake of Menzaleh toward the Bitter Lakes; thus Pelusium was defended.

The Persian fleet therefore withdrew and entered the Mendesian mouth of the Nile, taking the weakly-defended fortress at its mouth. Had Pharnabazos yielded to the advice of Iphicrates, a rapid advance to Memphis would have given final victory to Persia. But Pharnabazos hesitated, and in the end Nectanebo collected his forces and made a firm stand round Mendes. Harassing the Persians, he finally routed them in the field. The rise of the Nile and the flooding of the Delta enabled him to drive the enemy out of the country. Pharnabazos' retreat gave Egypt thirty years of freedom and of peace. Art, in a second renaissance, flourished, and trade with other lands prospered. The great sanctuaries from Philae to Sebennytus in the Delta (the modern Samannūd on the right bank of the Nile) now once more had their share in the wealth and security of the land. The names of Nectanebo I and of his second successor, Nectanebo II are repeatedly to be found, not only on additions to the works of their predecessors, but on new constructions, such as the porch of the vanished temple of Isis, at Philae, and the great gateway into the girdle wall of Karnak.

Travellers, too, from Greece once more arrived. Of these Plato was the most eminent, but also Chrysippus the physician, and Eudoxus the astronomer, spent many months studying with the priests in the Egyptian temples. Tradition has it that, introduced to Nectanebo II by letter from Agesilaus of Sparta, Plato brought with him a cargo of oil instead of money to meet his expenses on the way. It is believed that Euripides accompanied Plato and, falling ill, was treated by the priests with a sea-water cure.

Nectanebo I, dying in 361 B.C., left to his son Teos a land at peace. Teos, ambitious and turbulent, however, was not content to follow in his path. With thoughts of a war of conquest, he allied his country with the Asiatic princes in rebellion against their overlord, Persia, and following the example of his father in procuring help from both Sparta and Athens, he placed his Greek mercenaries (1,000 Spartans and 10,000 Athenians) under the aged Spartan King Agesilaus, and his fleet under the Athenian Chabrias. To find the necessary funds he requisitioned all the precious metal of Egypt, he taxed all production and in particular cereals, he increased taxation on imports, he suppressed the privileges that his father had conferred on the priesthood of Sais and finally he confiscated the colossal fortune of the temples. Thus he could pay the foreign troops in drachmae struck for the purpose, since they refused payment in kind. These impositions were little likely to endear him to the people of Egypt, and, in fact, he prepared for himself a rude awakening. Agesilaus had assumed that he would command not only the foreign mercenaries, but also the 80,000 Egyptians; thus when Teos assumed the supreme command himself, while the Egyptians mocked the aged and deformed Spartan king, Agesilaus was deeply offended.

It was not long before he had the opportunity to avenge the slight. Teos had left his brother in Egypt as regent, presuming that thus his anxieties would be confined to those of the campaign. At first all went well with the army, and it seemed as though Egypt would recover the empire in Asia. Treachery in Egypt betrayed Teos: not only did his brother stir up discontent there, but his nephew Nectanebo (Nekhtharhab) deserted from the army in Syria, carrying with him not only the greater part of the Egyptians, but also Agesilaus with his Spartan hoplites. Athens, too, recalled Chabrias, and King Teos was left no other alternative but flight to a refuge with his enemy at Susa. Shortly after he died there.

Meanwhile, Nectanebo found that in Egypt important forces were opposing his pretensions to the throne; he was even besieged in some walled town, and had it not been for the skill of Agesilaus he had been overwhelmed. He rewarded Agesilaus' defeat of the native troops by a gift of 230 talents and many presents. This was money the exhausted Spartan republic needed badly, but Agesilaus did not live to deliver this royal gift in person, for on

the road to Cyrene, where he had intended to embark for Greece, he died. His body, embalmed in wax, was carried home to Sparta. Nectanebo now had to face further invasions by the Persians in the year 357. With an army of stubborn native troops, and with further aid from Athens and Sparta, he successfully withstood the enemy. Thereby he indirectly encouraged further revolt in Phoenicia which drew off the enemy's attention and gave Egypt some years of peace during which Nectanebo turned his thoughts to the internal order and well-being of his country. Nor did he forget his duties to the gods. It was in the calm between the years 357-344 B.C. that the great temples were enriched by his additions, and even new temples, such as the Iseion in the Delta, were erected. To some temples he granted special privileges, such as the right to collect one-tenth of all goods entering the port of Canopus, which he gave to the temple of Neith at Naucratis.¹

Had he not taken sides in the revolt in Phoenicia and Cyprus in 344 B.C. the peace of Egypt might yet have remained untroubled. In sending a large force of Greek mercenaries under one Mentor, a Rhodian, to the support of the King of Sidon, he called down on Egypt the wrath of Artaxerxes. This monarch who commanded the Persian forces in person could neither be blind to the wealth of the rebellious Egyptian provinces nor forgive their revolt. He attacked first Sidon and then Cyprus with success. The following year the Eunuch Bagoas, at the head of a mixed force of Persians and Greeks, supported by a fleet of 300 triremes, and guided by the treacherous Mentor whose life had been spared at the sack of Sidon, advanced on Pelusium. Finally, overcoming the defences of the mouths of the Nile, the fleet pursued the retreating Egyptians to Memphis. Thence Nectanebo withdrew, whether to Ethiopia, as Diodorus says, or only to Southern Egypt is not known. His main desire was achieved: he saved his treasure with his life. His Greek mercenaries, who naturally distrusted their Egyptian allies, saw little object in further fight; they submitted to Bagoas, and the towns of the Delta, deserted by their defenders, opened their gates to the Persian commander-in-chief. For a year or two Nectanebo may have reigned in Upper Egypt, but during that period, 342-341 B.C., the tale of sacrilege that followed the arrival of Artaxerxes in Memphis surpassed that of

¹ The decree is in the Cairo Museum.

Cambyeses. The sacred cow, the ram and other divine animals served to replenish the royal banquets, while the temples were despoiled of their wealth and archives, the towns razed to the ground, the nobles massacred. The mystery of Nectanebo's last years has given rise to romantic conjecture. Myth had it that, being a magician, he took on the form of the Egyptian god Amūn, and in that shape begot by Olympias in Macedonia a son, Alexander, the future King of Egypt. Thus Egypt was rescued from the Persian foreign yoke by an Egyptian king, Alexander, son of Nectanebo in appearance (but, in fact, son of Amūn), who had come to his due inheritance. The origin of the myth may be explained in part by the fact that Nectanebo was worshipped as a god and that his sarcophagus¹ was found in Alexandria unused. That Nectanebo was still reigning in Egypt when Alexander was born in Macedonia confuses this romance still further. It is enough to say that antiquity has muffled from our sight the strange finale to the deeds of the great Pharaohs of Egypt.

A new Persian rule began, that of the Thirty-first Dynasty. It lasted for three brief reigns only, yet the satrapy of Egypt suffered severely during that short period. The population was overcome by exaction, destruction and systematic devastation. The divine images and such treasures as Nectanebo had left behind were carried off to Persia. The people were, however, not entirely supine, for a dynast, Khabbash, rose to power, and was certainly enthroned at Memphis. He restored certain gifts to the temple of Buto from spoil taken by the Persians, which is ample proof that, an active, vigorous patriot, he had some success in a struggle against the Persians. The memory of his acts lasted on to Ptolemaic times, so effective was it.²

Meanwhile, Artaxerxes Ochus had died in 338 B.C., poisoned by the Eunuch Bagoas. Though, as overlord, he had reigned for three years in Egypt, thus gaining a place in the chronology of the Kings of Egypt, he left no personal trace of his brief presence save the memory of a cruel and reckless despot who had begun his reign by the extirpation of his own family. He owed any success of the Persian forces to the Greek generals in his service, and to the foreign mercenaries in their commands. The government in

¹ Now in the British Museum.

² A stela in the Cairo Museum records the confirmation of these gifts by Ptolemy I Soter while still satrap of Egypt under Alexander IV.



HORUS PROTECTING NECTANEBO II, XXXTH DYNASTY

By courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Cyprus and Egypt he had left to Bagoas, while to Mentor he confided Phoenicia, who held authority there till his death two years later. Bagoas placed Arses, the son of Artaxerxes, on the throne of Persia, but very shortly the young ruler showed plainly that the bondage in which the truculent Bagoas held him was intolerable, so to solve the problem Bagoas contrived his death also. Darius Codomannus, a distant relative of the royal house, succeeded, and of the condition of Egypt during these last years there is little record. They were uneasy times, and commerce with other countries must have fluctuated under the adverse influences of internal revolt and maritime warfare. The subjugation of the Eastern Mediterranean to Persia between the years of 341 B.C. and 333 B.C. may have encouraged seaborne trade, but in Egypt the energies of the people seemed to have vanished. That elaborate administration was set up may be guessed from the existence from end to end of the country of the efficient Persian postal system. The laws of the country remained unchanged for we find Jewish soldiers of the Persian garrison at Aswān using Egyptian forms of contract in Aramaic translations. In 336 B.C. Bagoas, attempting yet a third murder, that of Darius himself, met his end.

Darius now was preoccupied with vast preparations for the conquest of Greece and turned his thoughts from Egypt. At the river Granicus his forces under Spithridates met with defeat at the hands of Alexander, King of Macedon. Further misfortunes awaited them during the next three years as Alexander fought his way through the Greek cities and colonies of Asia Minor. The final clash came at Issus in October, 333 B.C. This was a repetition of the fighting on the Granicus: while Darius' pusillanimity contributed to the rout of his army, as thinking the battle lost he turned and fled, his bodyguard galloping after him. Once again Alexander stayed his hand: the subjection of the coastline from the Orontes to the Nile was of more moment to him than the pursuit of a beaten enemy. Darius did not draw rein until he reached the Euphrates, and only then did he think of his mother, wife and family whom he had left on the field of Issus. From Thapsacus he offered to ransom the captives at the price of 'as much silver as Macedonia will hold', and arrogantly counselled Alexander to retire lest calamity befell him. Issus had taught the Great King nothing. To the advice Alexander replied

by recommending Darius to abate his own pretensions, to recognize that his empire was lost. But he could not afford to waste time with this foolish enemy: still intent upon his strategy, he was in a hurry to occupy Sidon and Tyre, the Phoenician cities that furnished the Persian navy with its finest ships and best sailors. Sidon capitulated, but Tyre refused to permit Alexander to sacrifice to Melcart the Tyrian Heracles within the city. Alexander accepted the challenge: invested the fortress on land, blockaded its communication with the sea. A bloody and protracted siege followed, until famine reduced the city to impotence. Meanwhile, Darius was coming to his senses. Now addressing Alexander as king, he offered the hand of his daughter Statira, with all Asia Minor as her dowry. It was too late: Alexander was contemplating a future more magnificent than mere alliance by marriage: nothing but undivided empire would now content him. Bessas, Governor of Bactriana, hoping to succeed Darius, assassinated him, and thus died the last Persian overlord of Egypt, leaving the way clear for a deliverer.

The reduction of Tyre lost Alexander valuable time, and it was midsummer (332 B.C.) before he began his advance to Egypt. Gaza caused a fresh delay; its commander, Batis, a gigantic black, swore to die rather than surrender. The defiance obliged Alexander to bring up the siege train, and the first grand assault nearly cost him his life. Severely wounded, he fell fainting to the ground. News of the mishap penetrated to Macedonia. Olympias was distracted: she wrote hastily begging her son to be careful of his diet during convalescence. She even sent her own cook Pelignes to Gaza, and she hoped that Alexander would recognize the magnitude of the sacrifice.

Thus summer had faded into winter before Alexander could take the road to Egypt. He passed through Pelusium in December, reached Memphis a few days later, his advance up the Nile being in the nature of a triumphal procession. The Persian garrison fled, the Egyptian peasantry called down blessings on his head, the priests and nobles welcomed him as a heaven-born deliverer. It was not surprising, seeing that for two centuries the hand of the Persian had lain heavily on the land of Egypt. Time and again her people had thrown off the yoke; time and again it had been laid more painfully upon her neck. Resistance came to an end in 341 B.C., when Nectanebo, the last king of the last

dynasty of the Pharaohs, fled into Ethiopia, and the people abandoned hope. Ten years later the whisper passed that the Persian power was broken, that liberty would replace subjection.

In the course of this campaign, Alexander's programme had broadened. The first objective, the liberation of the Greek colonies of Asia Minor, had given way to a second, the occupation of the shores of the Aegean from the Hellespont to the Nile, and since the battle of Issus a third, the empire of Asia, was taking shape in his mind. It was to be a dominion of Hellenized peoples of which he would be the supreme head, and at Memphis he considered how he could persuade Egypt to become a member of the empire. It would be no easy task to reconcile Egyptian customs with Greek, and religion in particular presented extreme difficulty. The Greeks worshipped gods in the form of man; the Egyptians revered them, as often as not, in the shape of animals. Each nome or district held some animal or other sacred: the snake in Buto, the modern Dessuk; the cat in Bubastis, the modern Zagazig; the hawk in Edfu; the crocodile in Crocodilopolis, the modern Medīnet el-Fayyūm; the ibis in Hermopolis, the modern El-Ashmunēn; the wolf in Lycopolis, the modern Asyūt. In secular matters the Egyptian seemed perpetually to reverse the common practice of mankind, as that inquisitive historian Herodotus a hundred years earlier had remarked.¹ Thus he wrote from right to left, he made use of two calligraphies, the hieratic or sacerdotal and the demotic or popular. The man, too, sat at home and worked the loom, while the woman went to business or gossiped in the market. Priests were a law unto themselves; elsewhere in the world they wore their hair long; in Egypt they shaved the head. But while Alexander meditated upon these and kindred differences, the priests and nobles almost came to blows over the privilege of conducting him round Memphis. It was certainly a city worth exploring. Profiting from the decline of Thebes, Memphis and its suburb Saqqara had recovered their ancient prestige. The perimeter of the walls exceeded a circuit of sixteen miles, the cosmopolitan population reckoned itself in thousands. The citadel or 'white wall' dominated the area enclosed by the defences, the famous temple of Ptah, the architect of the universe, adjoined the citadel. To the south lay the Phoenician quarter or 'camp of the Tyrians', the

¹ *Herodotus* II, 36.

shrine of Isis and Astarte and the sanctuary of the Kabiri, the torturers of the wicked after death. To the north was the Apeum, the splendid hall or stable of the sacred bull, and nearby, crowning the crest of a small eminence, stood the handsome temple of Osiris-Apis. On higher ground beyond rose the pyramids of Saqqara, the last resting-place of the earlier Pharaohs, and at the foot of these imposing tombs there lay a vast cemetery of embalmed bodies, men and animals.

Admiring eyes followed Alexander as he passed from shrine to shrine. He was certainly a very personable young man: slim and muscular in figure, of medium height, of elastic features and limbs. His look was serene, his complexion fresh and fair, his forehead lofty, his nose finely chiselled, his carriage erect and graceful. Little wonder if the artist Apelles fell in love with this face, or the sculptor Praxiteles with his figure. Moreover, his simple habits of life commanded respect from the easy-going Egyptians. Alexander, indeed, was superior to the common faults of youth. Abstemious in all things, he drank sparingly, he kept no mistress: when he needed distraction, he found it in philosophy and literature. Epic poetry was his favourite study, so that when the jewelled perfume casket of his enemy Darius fell to him as a prize of war, he could think of no better use to put it to than to hold his copy of Homer annotated by Aristotle. Later, other ambitions pursued him; but in these early years he spoke, no doubt, the truth when he assured Aristotle, 'I would rather excel in knowledge and virtue than in power and dominion'. Thus it came about that Memphis would have been glad if Alexander remained permanently in Egypt, and to symbolize that hope the high priest introduced him into the Holy of Holies of the temple of Ptah, recited the ancient formula, 'Come hither, son of my loins, that I may give thee the dominion of Rē' and the majesty of Horus,' and invited him to sacrifice in the mausoleum of Osiris-Apis. Through this initiation, Alexander became a Pharaoh, son and vice-regent on earth of Amen-Rē, the supreme deity of Upper and Lower Egypt. Egyptian tradition dictated that the high priest of Thebes should confirm the title of divinity. But Thebes was distant, and time was lacking; so Alexander contented himself with paying homage to Amen-Rē of Thebes by the mouth of his lieutenant, Apollonius, and by rebuilding the sanctuary of Amenophis III in the temple of Luxor.

He was profoundly impressed with what he had seen and heard. Egypt, indeed, was the image of heaven, the temple of the gods, the home of mystery and oracle. The vague belief of Plato in the immortality of the soul seemed a pale conception of the Egyptian tradition of the after-life. Only the knowledge that no Macedonian soldier would accept any title of deification at the hands of a strange Egyptian god damped Alexander's satisfaction, and he considered how he could persuade his troops to abandon their prejudice. It was a matter of some importance to him. The reputation of divinity would be a practical asset in the campaign he was projecting into the heart of Asia, and Alexander was no leader to let go an advantage. As he meditated there came into his mind an old scandal concerning his parents, Philip and Olympias. They were estranged, and to widen the breach, enemies of the queen whispered that Alexander was not the child of Philip but of Zeus, who in the form of a serpent with ram's horns had seduced Olympias. Alexander himself had been too well educated to pay heed to such gossip, and Aristotle, his preceptor, had inspired him with a healthy scepticism for all gods and their oracles. But the army was more credulous, and Alexander thought to turn now the legend to his own advantage. The existence of the oracle of Zeus Ammon in the Oasis of Siwah, consulted by the hero Perseus and praised by the poet Pindar, provided the inspiration he sought. No Macedonian officer or soldier would deny a title of divinity conferred by Zeus, supreme god of the Greek pantheon, and Alexander decided to visit the oracle at Siwah. He was the more disposed to make the journey, in that he was intending to found a new capital that had direct access to the sea. So in expectation of fulfilling both missions, he took ship and sailed down the Canopic arm of the Nile. At the mouth he turned west till he passed under the lee of the island of Pharos. He was now in familiar waters. He knew the *Odyssey* by heart, and he was in a passion to set foot on this 'Pharian Isle', beloved by Ulysses, hero of Homer's story. Opposite Pharos he found the little village of Rhacotis, with its eighteenth-dynasty fort, an ideal site for a commercial capital. A mole uniting the mainland with the island would provide harbourage from the prevailing north-west winds, while an immense fresh-water lake would protect the settlement in the rear. He traced the boundaries of his new foundation, a semicircular perimeter shaped

like a Macedonian soldier's cloak, he mapped the course of the main streets, he assigned areas to the future Macedonian, Egyptian and Jewish inhabitants, and finally he provided his new city, Alexandria, with a patron deity, the harmless snake known throughout the Greek world as the Agatho Daimon or protecting genius of the home. It was also a subtle compliment to Egypt: for there, too, the serpent played an important role in popular belief, witness the uraeus or cobra, one symbol of the royal power. Leaving to others the execution of the building of Alexandria, he hurried on to the home of the oracle in the company of Ptolemy, future King of Egypt, Callisthenes, the royal historian, and Aristander, the court soothsayer. He marched parallel with the sea as far as Paraetonium, the modern Mersa Matruh; then, turning south, he advanced across the desert. It was an arduous pilgrimage. The season was winter, the nights were frigid, rain fell heavily, the wind blew violently from the south, obliterating trace of the caravan road, blinding the guides. But on the tenth day the palm trees of the oasis came in sight, and a procession of priests, bearing a golden barque in which reclined the image of the god, advanced to meet the stranger. At the entrance of the temple stood the aged high priest, who, welcoming Alexander as the son of Amen-Rē', conducted him into the Holy of Holies. There Alexander put to the oracle his questions. Was he of divine birth, was dominion over the world reserved for him, had he punished all his father's murderers? The answers to the two first were as Alexander wished; that to the third was no less satisfactory. 'Do not blaspheme,' whispered the oracle reprovingly, 'no mortal can take the life of thy father.' There followed a pause. Then came the word, 'Thou desirest to know if the murderers of Philip have all been punished. No one of them has escaped.' It was enough for the visitor. Hastily he wrote to his mother, Olympias, styling himself King Alexander, son of Zeus-Ammon. It did not please Olympias. She replied coolly, 'Please do not slander me before Hera, wife of Zeus. She will certainly do me a mortal injury if you admit that I was her husband's paramour.' Later, Alexander's companions were admitted to the shrine, and the oracle obligingly answered their single questions too: 'Shall the army pay divine honours to the king?' by the reply: 'The army must do all that is pleasing to Zeus.' Siwah, indeed, had well repaid the pains of the visit.

The news spread: the oracles of Greece and the Greek colonies of Asia Minor repeated the assurances given in Siwah, and embassies hurried to Memphis to offer congratulations. It was whispered that the world, encompassed by the sun in its daily passage from east to west, was Alexander's: and divine right and universal empire thus became to the Macedonian soldier inseparable. At Memphis once again Alexander applied his mind to the future government of Egypt. It was a perplexing business. In Asia Minor, Syria and Phoenicia he had solved the problem by appointing Macedonians or Greeks as satraps in place of Persians; but he could not continue this practice indefinitely, nor was he certain that Egypt, profoundly attached to her own institutions, would submit to an administration staffed by strangers. He chose, therefore, as a lesser risk to leave justice and administration in the hands of the Egyptians, applying both in accordance with national law and custom, but reserving for himself defence and finance. He could lay his hands upon a dozen officers competent to take charge of the first: it was more difficult to find in the army a candidate equal to the responsibilities of the second. In the end he chose one Cleomenes of Naucratis, the town of the Delta peopled by Greeks, reputed among his fellow citizens to be a man of probity and work. Revenue, indeed, was always Alexander's particular care, for he campaigned on the theory that war must support war, and he looked to Egypt for a handsome contribution.

Before he began the march into Asia, Alexander repaid the hospitality he had received by inviting Memphis to witness running, wrestling and musical and dancing competitions. The festival began with a military review and ended with a banquet, a princely entertainment that the pleasure-loving Egyptians appreciated highly. Eat, drink and be happy had always been the maxim of Memphis: witness the injunction laid upon one high priest by his dead wife: 'Hail, brother and friend. Let not thy heart cease to eat bread, drink wine and love women.' Simultaneously, to broaden the world's knowledge, he sent an exploring party into the land of the cataracts: he desired a scientific explanation of the causes of the Nile inundation. The report justified his scepticism of Herodotus' belief,¹ and permitted Aristotle to assert: 'This matter is then no longer a mystery'.

¹ *Herodotus* II, 16, 19.

Alexander had now been six months in Egypt, and now stood at the parting of the ways. He had accomplished his original mission: he had freed cities and nations from despotism, he had driven the Persians back to the walls of Babylon. He was free, therefore, to follow up the enemy or return to Greece. Ambition tempted him into the first, and in the spring of 331 B.C., recrossing the Nile, he took the road to Tyre.

The hope of an era of benevolent and honest government was now vainly cherished by Egypt. No sooner had Alexander departed than oppression and abuse of authority reappeared. Cleomenes proved corrupt and insatiable; for eight years the country groaned once more under foreign financial exactions, to find a true redeemer only in Ptolemy, that companion of Alexander whose choice of Egypt as his share in Alexander's empire gave that country 300 years of more stable administration than it had known since the age of the early Ramessides.

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INDEX

- Abc, 82
 Abraham, 42
 Abu Simbel, 14, 94
 Abydos, 13, 108
 Achaemenes, 122, 127-8
 Acoris (Hakor), 131-3
 Acre, 64
 Adicrau, 100
 Adorani, 43
 Aegina, 96
 Agag, 30
 Agesilaus, 131-4
 Ahasuerus, 127
 Ahaz, 60
 Ahizah, 41
 Ahmosē Nofretere, 51
 Ahura Mazda, 125
 Akhenaten, 49
 Alasia, 26
 Aleppo, 4
 Alexander the Great, 121, 123, 137-44
 Alexandria, 142
 Altaqu, 65-7
 Amalekites, 30
 Amasis ('Ahmosē'), 74, 94, 101, 103-13, 118-19, 123
 Amasis (II), 127
 Amen-Rē, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 15, 22, 23, 25, 26, 28, 29, 31, 32, 33, 38, 44-6, 48, 49, 51, 52, 54, 56, 58, 67, 70, 71, 72, 75, 76, 77, 80, 93, 107, 121, 140, 142
 Amenardis, 52, 76
 Amenemopē, 21, 32, 33
 Amenhotpe, 16, 19
 Amenmosē, 1
 Amenophis I, 17, 30, 51
 — II, 49
 — III, 14, 140
 Amenrud, 36, 50, 51
 Amon, 64
 Amonites, 22
 Amor, 3
 Amorites, 69
 Ammon, 96
 Amūn, 3, 7, 11, 15, 19, 20, 22-6, 48, 50, 54, 67, 120, 126, 132, 136
 Amyitis, 85
 Amyrtaius, 129, 130, 131
 Anaxagoras, 129
 Andropolis, 101
 Aniba, 15
 'Anklmcsneferibrē, 93, 103
 Anta, 33
 Antalcidas, 132
 Apcum, 83, 140
 Apis, 83, 84, 99, 121, 122, 126, 140
 Apollo, 89
 Apollonius, 140
 Appelles, 140
 Aprics (Hophra), 74, 96, 97, 99-103, 119
 Aqaba, 39, 89
 Arabia, 89
 Arabs, 62
 Arcadia, 124
 Argos, 95
 Aristander, 142
 Aristotle, 140, 141, 143
 Armenia, 125
 Arsaphes, 48
 Artaxerxes I, 115, 128, 129
 — II, 130
 — III, Ochus, 131, 135, 136
 Arvad, 64
 Arses, 131, 137
 Aryandes, 123-5, 127
 Asa, 47
 Ascalon, 63, 64, 69, 81
 Ashdod, 81
 Ashur, 69, 70, 73, 85
 Ashurbanipal, 71-6, 78, 79, 84, 86, 87, 121
 Ashuruballit, 87, 88
 Assyria and Assyrians, 59-65, 84, 85, 87, 88, 90, 92, 93, 97, 123

- Astaroth, 93
 Astarte, 41, 140
 Aswān, 14, 32, 72, 80, 100, 104, 119, 137
 Asyūt, 7, 52, 139
 Athene, 107
 Athens, 95, 128, 129, 132-5
 Athribis, 7, 9, 50, 52, 56, 70, 71
 Atum, 1
 Azza, 40

 Baal, 93
 Babylon, 61, 68, 69, 78, 79, 84-6, 88, 90-92, 97, 98, 103, 106-10, 117, 119, 121, 123, 125, 130, 144
 Bactriana, 138
 Bagoas, 135-7
 Baharia, 99
 Barce, 124
 Bast, 38, 48, 49, 129
 Batis, 138
 Battus, 100, 111, 123, 124
 Bedel, 24
 Bedouin, 113
 Behistun, 112, 123
 Bekenptah, 50
 Bekken, 12
 Bel Ibni, 84
 Benha, 9
 Ben Hadad, 47
 Beni Suēf, 32, 37
 Benjamin, 40, 47
 Bessas, 138
 Bethel, 61
 Bethlehem, 43, 98
 Black Sea, 80
 Bocchoris (Bekemanef), 58, 62, 63
 Branchidae, 89
 Bubastis, 38, 40, 46, 50, 51, 52, 89, 105, 129, 139
 Bubastite Gate, 44
 Busiris, 70-72, 127
 Buto, 127, 136, 139
 Buyuwawa, 37
 Byblus, 23-6, 93, 128

 Callisthenes, 142

 Cambyes, 93, 112-14, 115-23, 125, 127, 136
 Canaan, 8, 30, 60, 62, 64, 81, 91, 96, 97, 99, 106
 Canopic Nile, 59, 81, 104, 105, 141
 Canopus, 71, 80, 104, 135
 Carchemish, 4, 5, 90, 91
 Carthage, 118, 121
 Caspian Sea, 80
 Cectrops, 95
 Cœcyphalac, 128
 Černý, Prof. J., 21, 22
 Chabrias, 133, 134
 Chaldaea and Chaldaeans, 84, 85, 89, 91, 96-8, 106
 Charaxus, 106
 Chemosh, 41
 Chrysippus, 133
 Cilicia, 109
 Cleomenes, 143-4
 Conon, 131
 Coptus, 12, 13, 89
 Crocodilopolis, 139
 Croesus, 109-11, 117
 Cunaxa, 130
 Cummerians, 78
 Cyaxares, 85, 87, 106
 Cyprus, 26, 96, 109, 111, 124, 128, 132, 135, 137
 Cyrenaica, 117-18, 121, 123, 124
 Cyrene, 100, 111, 123, 124, 135
 Cyrus, 109, 110-12, 117, 122, 123

 Dakhlah, 39
 Damascus, 59, 60
 Dan, 61
 Danaoi, 3
 Danaus, 95
 Daphnac, 80, 81, 92, 98, 99, 114, 115
 Darius I, 112, 115, 122-7
 — II, 115, 129
 — III, Codomannus, 131, 137-8
 David, 30, 34
 Deffineh, 80
 Delos, 129
 Delphi, 109, 111
 Demonax, 123
 Dēr-el-Bahri, 38

- Derr, 14
 Dessuk, 139
 Dhutmosē, 33
 Diodorus, 62, 121, 135
 Dionysius, 107
 Djeserkarē, 17
 Dog River, 70
 Dor, 24, 26
 Doricha, 106
 Dynastics—see Contents, p. vii

 Edfu, 127, 139
 Edjō, 8
 Edom, 64, 96
 Ekron, 65
 Elam, 84
 El-Ashmunēn, 37, 52, 139
 Elephantine Island, 9, 51, 80, 94, 108
 Eliakim, 65, 89
 Elis, 94-5
 El-Kāb, 132
 El-Khargah, 126
 Ephesus, 132
 Ephraim, 41
 Esarladdou, 68-70, 74, 78-80
 Esdrachon, 85
 Ēse, 11, 18
 Ethiopia and Ethiopians, 47, 51, 53, 54, 58, 62, 63, 68, 70, 80, 94, 101, 117, 119, 120, 122, 139
 Eudoxus, 133
 Euphrates, 61, 64, 69, 84-9, 91, 96, 98, 110, 128, 137
 Euripedes, 133
 Evagoras, 132
 Ezekiel, 98
 Ezion-Geber, 39

 Gaius, 132
 Galilee, 60
 Gaumata, 122
 Gaza, 33, 40, 61, 62, 81, 113, 138
 Geb, 1
 Gebel Barkal, 67, 72
 Gebelēn, 29
 Gedaliah, 98
 Gilead, 60

 Granicus, 137
 Greece and Greeks, 89, 94, 95, 99-102, 104, 105, 107, 127, 139
 Gyges, 78

 Hakor—see Acoris
 Haldians, 62
 Hamurabbi, 110
 Hanno, 90
 Ĥarakhte, 15, 46, 48
 Ĥaremsaf, 45
 Harran, 87, 88, 109
 Ĥarsēse I, 36, 46
 — II, 36, 50
 Ĥatshepsut, 51
 Hebron, 43
 Hecataeus, 95
 Ĥekkkheperrē' Sheshonk, 36
 Heliopolis, 7, 22, 46, 53, 56, 107, 127
 Hellenium, 107
 Hellinicus, 129
 Hera, 107, 111, 142
 Heracleopolis, 35, 37, 48, 50, 52, 53, 62, 69, 73, 77, 92
 Hermopolis, 7, 37, 52, 53, 54, 55, 139
 Hermotybians, 99, 100
 Hezekiah, 64-7
 Hibis, 127
 Hipponon, 54
 Hiram, 39, 40
 Hophra, 96
 Ĥōr, 92
 Horus, 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, 66, 83, 126, 127, 140
 Hosea, 61
 Hoshea, 60
 Ĥriĥōr, 19, 21-3, 26-8, 32, 38, 52
 Hyksos, 49

 Ibrim, 14, 15
 Ichthyophagi, 119
 Ihnasyah el-Medinah, 37
 Inarus, 128-9
 Iphicrates, 133
 Ipsampul, 14
 Irasa, 100
 Irsu, 1
 Isaiah, 61, 64, 65, 99

- Iscion, 135
 Ishtar, 69, 70, 72, 85
 Isis, 13, 66, 108, 126, 129, 133, 140
 Israel, 30, 34, 39-41, 59-61, 110
 Issus, 137, 139
 Izezi, 12

 Jehoahaz, 89
 Jehoiakim, 89, 91
 Jehoiakin, 91, 92
 Jeremiah, 81, 90, 91, 96-8, 107
 Jeroboam, 40-43
 Jerusalem, 43-5, 64, 65, 67, 69, 89,
 91, 92, 97-9
 Joppa, 39, 64
 Jordan, 61
 Josiah, 88, 89, 91
 Judah, 40, 47, 59-61, 64, 65, 68, 81,
 84, 88, 89, 91, 96, 97

 Kabiri, 122, 140
 Kalasirians, 99, 100
 Karamat, 38
 Karbani, 71
 Karnak, 20, 22, 23, 28, 44, 51, 54, 66,
 67, 71, 77, 80, 132, 133
 Kashta, 51, 52, 76
 Kchck, 6
 Khabbash, 136
 Khargah, 127, 129
 Khnum, 9, 51, 72, 83
 Khnumibre', 126
 Khons, 8
 Khonsu, 54
 Kush, 6, 58, 68, 70

 Lackish, 64, 65
 Ladika, 111
 Lebanon, 23, 25, 39, 90
 Libnah, 65
 Libya and Libyans, 2, 3, 36, 37, 39,
 40, 42, 47, 62, 79, 100, 101, 106,
 117, 118, 123, 124, 128, 132
 Luxor, 51, 54, 66, 140
 Lycopolis, 127, 139
 Lydia, 78, 109, 110-12, 117, 130

 Macedonia, 136
 Mackarē', 31

 Ma'kama, 46
 Manasseh, 41, 68, 69
 Manetho, 68
 Mantusia, 124
 Marduk, 119
 Marca, 80
 Maresshah, 47
 Marcotis, 128
 Masaherta, 21, 31
 Massagetac, 112
 Me, 48
 Media and Medes, 61, 62, 84-7, 96,
 109, 122, 123, 125
 Medinet el-Fayyūm, 139
 Medinet Habu, 3, 7, 9, 40, 132
 Megabysos, 128, 129
 Megara, 128
 Megiddo, 15, 20, 88
 Melcart, 138
 Melutkhi, 66
 Memnon, 14
 Memphis—*passim*
 Occupied by Pi'ankhi, 55
 Shabako, 63
 Esarhaddon, 69
 Taharqa, 70
 Darius, 126
 Alexander, 138
 Sacked by Cambyes, 122
 Artaxerxes, 135
 Menahem, 60
 Mendes, 52, 71, 72, 129, 131, 133
 Menephtah, 1, 2, 19
 Menkheperre', 21, 31, 32, 35
 Mentemhē, 67, 71, 75, 92
 Mentor, 135, 137
 Menzaleh, 133
 Meroe, 73
 Mersa Matruh, 142
 Meshwesh, 2, 3, 4
 Mesopotamia, 59, 72, 87, 109
 Miletus, 89, 95
 Millo, 41
 Min, 8, 13
 Moab and Moabites, 64, 91, 96
 Moeris, 53, 125
 Moloch, 41
 Momemphis (Menūf), 101

- Montu, 15
 Moses, 110
 Mount Seir, 5
 Mut, 8, 45, 51, 54, 67, 71, 80
 Mutmüdjem, 30
 Muzri, 61

 Nabonidus, 108, 109
 Nabopolassar, 84, 85, 87, 88, 90, 91
 Nabu, 85
 Nahum, 73, 86
 Nahr el-Assy, 89
 Napata, 22, 51, 52-4, 58, 63, 66, 67,
 71-3, 80, 93
 Naphthali, 60
 Nastasen, 119
 Naucratis, 104-7, 111, 135, 143
 Nebuchadnezzar, 85, 90-92, 94, 96-8,
 106-8
 Necho, 69, 72, 74, 75, 79, 87-92, 95,
 97, 114
 Nectanebo I (Nekhtnebef), 131-4
 — II (Nekhtnarhab), 131, 133-6,
 138
 Neferites I (Nef'arud), 131-2
 — II, 131, 132
 Neferkarē', 30
 Nefrurē', 51
 Neith, 93, 99, 107, 108, 118, 119, 121,
 125, 127, 135
 Nekhbet, 8
 Nephra, 127
 Nesamün, 19
 Nesbanebded, 21
 Neshör, 100
 Nimrod, 36, 48, 50, 52-5
 Nineveh, 61, 68-70, 72, 78, 79,
 84-7
 Nitocris, 76, 77, 93
 Nubia, 6, 21, 48, 58, 62

 Olympias, 136, 138, 141, 142
 Olympos, 94
 Ombo, 7
 'Onency, 10
 Opet—Festival of, 54
 Ormazd, 123
 Orontes, 59, 89, 90, 97, 137

 Osiris, 8, 38, 49, 84, 99, 107, 108, 126,
 140
 Osorkon I, 36, 45-7
 — II, 36, 47-50, 59
 — III, 36, 50
 — IV, 36, 50-52, 56, 76
 Osorkon (priest), 36, 50
 Otanes, 130
 Oxyrhynchus, 54

 Palestine (see Israel, Judah), 4, 20, 109
 Papremis, 128, 129
 Paractonium, 142
 Patarbemis, 101
 Pathros, 99
 Pbēo, 82
 Pebekkainen, 9, 10
 Pedamenopē, 82
 Pefnefdibast, 52, 53
 Pefnefdincit, 108
 Pekah, 60
 Pelcset, 23
 Pelcsti, 3, 30
 Peloponnesians, 128
 Pelusium, 71, 79, 80, 96, 105, 113,
 115, 116, 118, 133, 135, 138
 Pelusiac Nile, 30, 50, 104
 Pennē, 14, 15
 Pentwēre, 9, 10
 Peoples of the Sea, 3, 4
 Perseus, 141
 Persia and Persians, 109-30, 131-6
 Petasimto (Pediḥorramtoui), 94
 Petebast, 36, 50, 52, 54
 Petēsc, 56
 Petraca, 109
 Peyes, 10
 Phanes, 112-14
 Pharnabazos, 132, 133
 Pharos, 141
 Pheretina, 124
 Philae, 133
 Philip of Macedon, 141
 Philistines, 23, 30, 69, 80
 Phoenicia and Phoenicians, 88, 93, 96,
 97, 106, 109-11, 118, 122, 135,
 137, 139, 143
 Pi'ankh, 21, 28, 29

- Pi'ankhi, 52-9, 62, 67, 68
 Pi-Bast, 38
 Pi-bezethi, 38
 Pillars of Hercules, 89
 Pimay, 36, 49
 Pindar, 141
 Pinudjem I, 21, 30-32
 — II, 21, 32, 33
 Pisidians, 132
 Plataea, 127
 Plato, 133, 141
 Pliny, 89
 Plutarch, 62
 Praxiteles, 140
 Prosopitis, 128
 Psammetichus (Psamtek) I, 74-88,
 103, 104
 — II, 74, 92-5, 103
 — III, 74, 113-17
 Psamouthis (Psimut), 131-2
 Psebkh'ne, 21
 Psiur, 17, 18
 Psusennes I, 21, 30, 31
 — II, 21, 32, 34, 37, 38, 46
 Psusennes (priest), 21, 32, 33, 37
 Ptah, 7, 9, 18, 22, 34, 46, 48, 56, 66,
 67, 70, 107, 108, 119, 122, 126,
 130, 139, 140
 Ptolemy, 121, 142, 144
 Pul, 60
 Punt, 6
 Purem, 53-7
 Pwēr'o, 17-19
 Pythagoras, 95

 Qablinu, 84
 Qarqara, 60

 Rab Shakch, 65
 Ra'messenakhte, 12, 13, 19
 Rameses II, 2, 14, 19, 22, 31, 38, 89,
 126
 — III, 1, 2-10, 18, 20, 23, 31, 40, 52,
 93
 — IV, 1, 11-13, 19
 — V, 13, 14
 — VI, 13-15, 20
 — VII, 13, 15

 Rameses VIII, 13, 15
 — IX, 13, 15
 — X, 13, 19
 — XI, 13, 19, 20-23, 27
 Raphia, 62, 63
 Rē', 11, 21, 54, 56, 62, 107, 126-8, 140
 Rē'-Atum, 7
 Rehoboam, 41-4, 47
 Reisner, 52, 68
 Rezin, 60
 Rhacotis, 141
 Rhodes, 131
 Rhodopis, 106
 Riblah, 89, 97

 Sais, 50, 52, 58, 59, 63, 69, 71, 75, 76,
 83, 91, 93-5, 101, 103, 105, 107,
 108, 113, 118, 119, 125, 127, 129,
 134
 Salamis, 124, 127
 Samal, 70
 Samannūd, 133
 Samaria, 61, 64
 Samos, 95, 96, 111
 Santowē, 119, 121
 Sappho, 106
 Saqqara, 139, 140
 Sardes, 110
 Sargon II, 61-4, 68
 Saul, 30
 Scythians, 80
 Sebekemsaf, 19
 Sebennytus, 71, 132-3
 Sed Festival, 49
 Sekhmet, 7
 Sennah, 51
 Sennacherib, 64-8
 Serapeum, 62, 92, 99
 Sesostris, 51, 89
 Seth, 1, 48
 Sethos I, 19, 22, 31, 38
 — II, 1
 Setnakhte, 1, 2, 5
 Shabako, 58, 59, 61-4, 66
 Shabataka, 58, 66, 67
 Shalmaneser, 59, 60
 Shalmaneser IV, 60
 Shamash-shum-ukin, 78, 79

- Shebitku, 58, 66
 Shechem, 42, 43
 Sheklesh, 3
 Sheimaiah, 43, 44
 Shepnupet I, 51, 52, 76
 — II, 67, 75, 77
 Shepses, 47
 Sherden, 3, 6
 Shesiat, 7
 Sheshonk I, 35, 36-45, 47
 — II, 36, 49
 — III, 36, 49, 50
 — IV, 36, 50
 — V, 36, 49
 Sheshonk (priest), 36, 46
 Shiloh, 41
 Shishak, 36
 Shu, 7
 Shur, 69, 79
 Siamun, 21, 33, 34, 37, 40
 Sibi, 61
 Sidon, 64, 69, 96, 135, 138
 Silsilah, 14, 45
 Sincit—*see* Amasis
 Sinai, 6, 69, 79-81, 113, 116
 Siptah, 1
 Siwah, 120, 121, 141-3
 Smendes, 21-3, 27-30, 38
 Smendes (priest), 36
 Smerdis, 122, 123
 Solomon, 33-4, 39-42, 44, 89
 Solon, 95
 Sparta, 109, 111, 131, 132, 134, 135
 Spithridates, 137
 Statira, 138
 Strabo, 89, 104
 Suez, 69
 Susa, 134
 Susiana, 123
 Sutekh, 7
 Syene, 94
 Syria, 4, 20, 23, 40, 59, 60, 72, 87, 88,
 91, 109, 110, 131, 143
 Taharqa, 58, 63, 66-72, 76
 Tahpanhes, 107
 Takelot I, 36, 46, 47
 — II, 36, 49, 50
 Takelot III, 36, 50, 51
 Takelot (priest), 36, 50
 Tanis—*passim*
 Port of, 26, 29
 Temple area, 30, 33
 Tanutamun (Tanwetamani), 58, 71-3
 Taphenas, 80
 Tatenen, 11
 Tefnakhte, 52-6, 58, 59, 62, 63
 Tehna, 54
 Teima, 109
 Tei Nüter, 51, 52
 Tell el-Kebir, 69
 Teos, 131, 134
 Thales, 95
 Thapsacos, 40
 Thebaid, 75, 76, 93, 120
 Thebes—*passim*
 Thefts at Necropolis, 17
 Flooding of, 28
 Sacked by Ashurbanipal, 73
 Cambyses, 121
 Thekel, 23, 24, 26
 Theocles, 94
 Theste, 99
 This, 7
 Thoth, 7, 8
 Tiglath-pileser, 60
 Tigris, 33, 40, 59, 60, 85, 109
 Timsah (Lake), 79
 Tipsah, 40
 Tiyy, 9
 Tjehenu, 4
 Tjekker, 3
 Tjemhi, 4
 Tomery, 1, 6
 Tunip, 4
 Tuthmosis II, 30
 — III, 28
 Tyre, 24, 39, 68, 69, 96, 97, 106, 118,
 138, 144
 Uas, 127
 Udjahorresneit, 112, 118, 119, 125
 Ur, 109
 Urijah, 91
 Ushabti, 83

Wādi ʿet-Tumilāt, 69, 92

Wādi Hamimāmāt, 12

'Water of Prē', 5

Wawat, 14

Wenamūn, 20, 23-6

Wepwawet, 7

Weshesh, 3

Xenophon, 109, 130

Xerxes I, 115, 127, 128

Yewaskis, 51

Yewclot, 36, 50, 51

Yewepet, 36, 38, 45, 46, 52

Zagazig, 139

Zakar-Baal, 24-6

Zedekiah, 97

Zephaniah, 81

Zephatah, 47

Zerah, 47

Zeus, 94, 107, 141, 142

Zoroastrianism, 125





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